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THE

HISTORY OF NAPOLEON I

LANFREY

THE HISTORY

OF

NAPOLEON THE FIRST

BY

P. LANFREY

IN FOUR VOLUMES.—VOL. IV.

1808-1811

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This Translation has been made with the sanction of the Author.

THE

HISTORY OF NAPOLEON

CHAPTER I

NAPOLEON IN SPAIN

(*November* 1808–*January* 1809)

NAPOLEON had no sooner terminated his arrangements with Alexander, than he hastened to make Europe feel it by the haughty and irritating arrogance of his language. Austria especially, being the only continental power which at that moment could cause him embarrassment, should, he thought, be made to reflect on the consequences of this new change of fortune. Never capable, however, when successful, of keeping within bounds, instead of showing firmness and resolution, he broke forth into threats and bravado. On the 14th of October he answered the very courteous letter which Baron de Vincent had brought him from the emperor of Austria on the 29th of September. Having commenced by reminding this sovereign *that he might have dismembered the Austrian monarchy if he wished, but that he did not*,—an assertion remarkable in the first place for its bad taste, and secondly untrue, for even after Austerlitz he could not have done so without ruining himself,—Napoleon proceeded to give the emperor a series of warnings, which he intended to be so many insults to his dignity as a sovereign. 'What your Majesty is, *you are by my consent.* That is the best

proof that our accounts are settled, and that I require nothing more from you. . . . But your Majesty *ought not* to give cause for recommencing a discussion which fifteen years of war have ended. *You ought* to forbid every proceeding which can provoke war. . . . Let your Majesty abstain from every armament *which may cause me any uneasiness*, or make a diversion in favour of England. . . . Let your Majesty distrust all those who, by speaking of danger to your kingdom, disturb your happiness, that of your family, and of your people!'

This grave counsellor, who might have been the first to profit by the lessons of which he was so prodigal, ended his admonition by laying down a maxim pre-eminently edifying in his mouth. 'The best policy to-day,' he says, 'is *Simplicity and Truth!*' Such a profession of faith from the hand that signed the treaty of Bayonne was a priceless curiosity, a truly royal gem; above all, it was a clear indication of the sincerity and good intentions of Napoleon. So much so that the emperor of Austria, more deeply impressed than ever with the necessity of taking advantage of the remarkable opportunity afforded him by the war in Spain, continued to press forward his armaments with as much activity as the difficulties of his position and the vicinity of so suspicious a neighbour would permit.

The proposal for peace which the two potentates of Erfurt had agreed to address to England was drawn up in a far more moderate tone. They appealed to the duty of 'yielding to the wishes and requirements of all nations, and of putting an end to the misfortunes of Europe. Peace was as much the interest of the people of the Continent as of the people of Great Britain. They joined therefore in begging his Britannic Majesty to hearken to the *voice of humanity* by silencing that of passion, so as to insure the happiness of Europe, and of the present generation' (October 12, 1808).

This overture was made in the form of a letter addressed to the king of England, like all the communications of the same nature which Napoleon had previously forwarded to the British Cabinet. He had already endeavoured, but in vain, to enter into direct and personal relations with that monarch; to engage him in one of those seductive dialogues

in which he considered himself to excel, and which, once entered upon, would have been in itself a recognition by anticipation. But he had never succeeded in extracting in answer one word signed by the king of England. Constitutional scruples must, he imagined, have their weight in a persistence which drove him wild; and he thought that by presenting the name of the emperor of Russia this time by the side of his own, he would force King George to swerve from his system. As to the substance of his proposition, could he flatter himself that it would be accepted? One is almost tempted to believe it on seeing the innumerable precautions he recommended to his two negotiators, Champagny and Romanzoff, desiring them to avoid everything which could raise a difficulty or rouse British susceptibility. But it is impossible to admit that he could have had any serious intentions in making this overture, when it is seen that he was marching towards Spain with 200,000 men at the very moment that he was proposing the *uti possidetis* as the basis of the negotiations. How could he suppose that England, who had begun the war for Malta, would stop it at the moment he was seizing Spain and Portugal?

Whatever may have been his secret intention, his expectations were doubly disappointed. He obtained no answer from King George; and that of the Ministry addressed to him through Canning (October 28) soon proved to him that if he had hoped to discourage the Spanish insurgents by the news of negotiations in progress with England, his calculations in this respect would now be baffled. The note written by Canning, without repelling the offer made by the two emperors, clearly showed that their proposal had no chance of being accepted unless all the allies of England were admitted to the negotiations; and amongst these allies figured not only the kings of Naples, Portugal, and Sweden, but the Spanish insurgents also. England, said Canning, was not yet bound to Spain by any formal treaty, but she had undertaken engagements towards that people which were sacred in her eyes, and which bound her irrevocably to their cause.

This answer left little hope of agreement. It reached Paris on October 31. Napoleon had then already started for Spain, and he allowed twenty days to elapse before replying to the British note. On the 19th of November, when sending Champagny the draft of his answer, he betrayed the thought which had guided him in this long delay, and perhaps had even suggested the negotiations. 'You will find herewith,' he wrote to him, 'the draft of an answer to Mr. Canning's note. You can allow two or three days to pass in consultation with M. de Romanzoff. Then send off an intelligent courier, who will spread the report that *Spain has submitted*, or is on the point of submitting completely; that 80,000 Spaniards are already destroyed, etc. etc.' To increase the supposed effects of this false news, he enjoined Fouché to publish a series of articles in the newspapers of Holland, Germany, and Paris, announcing, first, the preparations, then the landing, and lastly the complete success of a purely imaginary expedition by Murat to Sicily. 'Give as details,' said he, 'that King Joachim disembarked with 30,000 men; that he left the Regency to his wife; that he landed at *Faro . . . so that they may believe it in London, and that it may alarm them*' (November 19). All this was pure invention, yet it was to form the subject of a dozen articles. It was with an 'accomplished fact,' therefore, that he intended to startle and win over England to his views. He did not, however, refuse to admit to the negotiations 'either the king reigning in *Sweden*, or the king reigning in *Sicily*, or the king reigning in the *Brazils*,' but the proposal to admit the Spanish insurgents 'could only be considered *as an insult* on the part of the English Government. . . . What would the English Government have said if the French Government had proposed to admit the *Catholic insurgents of Ireland?*'

Napoleon deceived himself egregiously by supposing that arguments of this sort would make an impression on the British Cabinet. He committed even a far greater mistake in attributing to Canning's ministry the timidity and ultra-pacific tendencies of Addington's and Fox's Cabinets. In spite of the reverses sustained by the conti-

nental powers, the strength and resources of England had gone on increasing during the last few years. The result of the continental blockade had been to place in her hands the monopoly of trade all over the world; and, especially from the instant that the first symptoms of dissolution had shown themselves in the gigantic Empire of the West, neither the English Government nor the nation had desired peace. The British Cabinet consequently hastened to put an end to this phantom of negotiation by a precise and categorical declaration that left no loophole for fresh subterfuges. It solemnly announced its firm intention not to abandon the generous Spanish nation, and by every means in its power to oppose 'an usurpation unparalleled in the history of the world.' This note was followed by an address from the Government to Europe, in which these remarkable words occurred: 'If among those nations which maintain against France a doubtful and precarious independence, there should be any which even now are balancing between the certain ruin of a prolonged inactivity and the contingent dangers of an effort to save themselves from that ruin; to nations so situated the delusive prospect of a peace between Great Britain and France could not fail to be peculiarly injurious. Their preparations might be relaxed by the vain hope of returning tranquillity; or their purpose shaken by the apprehension of being left to contend alone' (December 15).

The Emperor had quitted Paris on the 29th of October, after having opened the session of the Legislative Body and solemnly announced 'that he was going to crown the king of Spain in Madrid, *and to plant his eagles on the forts of Lisbon;*' a theatrical and presumptuous announcement, wanting in the only justification that might have excused it—namely, its prompt and complete realisation. On November 3 he was at Bayonne, hurrying on the mass of men, horses, and baggage which for the two previous months had been constantly passing through that town. Of the eight *corps d'armée* which were to form the army of Spain, about six had by that time got far into the Peninsula, and the corps of Mortier and Junot alone remained behind.

All these troops having advanced towards the Pyrenees before preparations were made for their reception, the passage of such numbers over bad roads and through a country that was totally destitute had produced indescribable disorder, and the distress was increased by the manner in which the small resources they did find were wasted. Napoleon hastened to restore order by severely reprimanding the military administration. But here, even more than elsewhere, the opportunity was afforded of observing that, although peculiarly solicitous as to those measures necessary to insure the supply to his troops of every article of a strictly military kind, such as ammunition, accoutrements, shoes, capotes, etc., he scarcely gave a thought to those intended for the comfort and food of the soldier. He even went so far as to countermand the latter in order to fix the attention of his administrators on the others. 'Send back all the reserve of cattle,' he wrote to Dejean. 'I do not require provisions; I have abundance of everything; nothing is wanting but waggons, military conveyances, greatcoats, and shoes. I never saw a country where the army was better fed.' Holding the maxim more strongly than ever that war must feed war, and especially desirous to apply it to Spain so as to make her feel the full weight of the calamities she had dared to brave, he left to each corps the duty of providing for itself, and living as best it could. Pillage, instead of being an occasional excess, had henceforth to be resorted to regularly, and became indispensable for the subsistence of the troops. It was made a military institution, and the unfortunate Spaniards were delivered over not only to an army thirsting for revenge, but to the tender mercies of hungry hordes.

During the previous three months our army in Spain had remained almost inactive in its positions on the Ebro, confining itself to defeating the feeble and ill-managed attacks made on both its flanks by the insurrectionary armies; on one side in Biscay near Bilbao, on the other on the Ebro in Aragon. Joseph, burning with the desire to make himself a military reputation, had conceived and also accepted more than one plan for attacking and, if

possible, destroying these corps; but Napoleon had placed his veto on all these fine projects. Having decided on acting with immense strength in Spain, it suited his views to encourage the self-confidence and hardihood of the Spanish generals, and not to commence action until he could collect sufficient force to crush them by one blow, and then suddenly appear as the *Deus ex machinâ*. That moment had at length arrived. In the narrow space which extends from the confines of Biscay to the river of Aragon he had now concentrated five army-corps, commanded by Lefebvre, Victor, Soult, Ney, and Moncey, who was to be replaced by Lannes. A sixth, commanded by Saint-Cyr and intended to act separately, was about to penetrate into Catalonia. Moreover, he had with him the Guard and a large corps of cavalry commanded by Bessières.

Although the zeal and patriotism of the Spaniards were still great, they were ill prepared to undergo a trial of so dangerous a nature—namely, that of maintaining and consolidating advantages gained by a first burst of enthusiasm. The miraculous success of their insurrection had roused the courage of the most timid, and raised the nation in its own estimation; but it had also excited amongst this unenlightened population, and even amongst many of its chiefs, an overweening confidence. They looked upon their task as ended at the very moment that it was about to become more difficult than ever. They occupied themselves with struggles for power, ambitious rivalries and local petty jealousies, at a time when the national defence ought alone to have absorbed all their thoughts. Instead of vigorously organising the army, exercising it, calling out all the available population, and choosing strong defensive positions, they lost their time in discussions and idle projects while Napoleon was engaged in heaping regiment upon regiment on the left bank of the Ebro.

The feeling of the necessities of the position had been sufficiently powerful at first to induce the local juntas, which had made the insurrection, to abdicate in favour of a *central junta* which should exercise supreme authority. This

central junta was composed of delegates from the local juntas, and it included eminent men amongst its members, such as Jovellanos and Moniño de Floridablanca. Too numerous, unfortunately, to act as an executive body, for it contained thirty-four members, it was, moreover, led by political and literary men, under circumstances and in a state of affairs which imperatively demanded men of action. It published several manifestoes, bestowed upon itself many magnificent titles, entered upon barren contests with the Royal Council which had preserved its administrative and judicial attributes, but adopted only very few efficacious measures. Some of its acts — concessions to popular passion—are to be regretted; such as the re-establishment of the Inquisition and the suspension of the sale of mort-main property. It cannot be seriously believed that this was a premeditated return towards the past, as the promoter of these measures was that same Floridablanca who had been ambassador to Pope Ganganelli at the time when d'Aranda effected his famous reforms; but it was an ill-conceived protest against the pretensions of French despotism. Napoleon had attacked the monks and the Inquisition, and that sufficed to re-establish them. Making the Inquisition popular was thus the first result of this much-vaunted policy!

The military measures which ought solely to have occupied attention in so perilous a crisis necessarily suffered from the hesitation and incapacity of the central power. The armies of the South had advanced towards the northern provinces; the troops of Seville, of Granada, and of Valencia, had reached the Ebro, under command of Castaños, to assist the insurgents of Castile and the Aragonese defending Saragossa; the ten thousand companions of Romana had come, after their romantic escape, to join the insurgents of Galicia and of the Asturias under General Blake; but, in spite of numberless decrees on paper, the effective strength of these armies had scarcely been increased; they were badly armed and worse disciplined; while the commissariat was equally inefficient. With the exception of a few old regular troops, they more

resembled a tumultuous gathering than disciplined corps capable of undertaking military operations.

With such elements, one system alone offered any chance of success against so formidable an adversary as Napoleon, and the overwhelming force he had collected. To avoid every general action, to retire step by step to rallying points fixed on beforehand, to let him entangle himself and scatter his troops throughout the vast extent of the Peninsula, to hold no positions but those of known strength, to confine themselves in general to harassing his corps, to intercepting his communications and capturing his convoys, such were the tactics, dictated at once by the nature of the country and the weakness of their resources, which a most distinguished military man, General Dumourier, had recently recommended to the Spanish insurgents, in a kind of manual expressly composed for their benefit. This line of conduct was the only one possible, and the two best generals whom Spain then boasted, Blake and Castaños, fully shared Dumourier's views. But so wise a plan neither pleased the presumption of the uneducated classes who wished to attack Napoleon instantly in order to destroy him, nor the suspicious distrust of the provinces, which, apparently abandoned, regarded every retrograde movement as so much treachery; nor did the two generals possess sufficient authority to enforce their opinions.

When Napoleon arrived to place himself at the head of his troops, the Spanish forces were distributed in four principal groups round our positions on the Ebro, forming a vast semicircle, which extended from the mountains of Biscay to the neighbourhood of Caparoso on the Aragon river. Blake operated on the left with from thirty-five to forty thousand men, in the environs of Balmaseda, covering Biscay, Santander, and the Asturias, while menacing our communications by the Bayonne route. In the centre the army of Castaños bordered the river from Cintruenigo to Calahorra, joining, on the right, the army commanded by the brothers Palafox from Tudela to Caparoso, and, with it, numbering nearly forty thousand men. To the rear of these positions, as a reserve near Burgos, extended

the army of Estremadura, commanded by Galuzzo, to whom the young Marquis of Belvedere had recently succeeded; it had not yet received its full strength, and he had not more than fifteen thousand men under his orders. There was a fifth army in Catalonia, it is true, but, quartered in that peculiar region as in a sort of intrenched camp where it would soon have to deal with Saint-Cyr and Duhesme, it could exert no influence on the general operations. They also expected from day to day the co-operation of the English army in Portugal, which was to reinforce that of Estremadura, but its intervention was forcibly delayed. General Moore, who commanded it, being obliged to effect his junction by land with a corps which had disembarked at Corunna, had himself, on starting from Lisbon, to perform long and difficult marches before he could take any part in the operations of the campaign. Moreover, the obstacles caused by the season, the bad state of the roads, and the difficulty of obtaining provisions without pillage, had been increased by delays traceable to the bad feeling of the Spanish authorities. His lieutenant Baird had been detained in quarantine at Corunna, and he had been obliged to send to Madrid before it was possible to obtain a free passage for a corps of auxiliaries.

With somewhat under ninety thousand men, therefore, the Spanish generals were ordered to stand out against the five army-corps which Napoleon had now collected on the Ebro. These corps, averaging five-and-twenty thousand each, formed, with the Guard and Bessières' cavalry, a total force of at least a hundred and sixty thousand men. Napoleon had only, as it were, to march forward and break, at every point, the Spanish line, which—as if still more to augment its weakness—seemed to have been unduly extended. His plan, at once most simple and decisive, consisted in cutting it in two and advancing straight on Burgos, which was covered only by Belvedere's feeble detachment. Once arrived there, he intended to divide his corps to the right and the left, and thus turn the two principal Spanish armies by pushing one towards the

sea, and the other to the Pyrenees, or at the very least placing them between two fires.

The encounters which had taken place on the eve of Napoleon's entry into Spain, at Zornoza between Blake and Lefebvre, at Logroño and at Lerin, between Ney and Castaños, Moncey and Palafox, might have thwarted this plan had the Spaniards chosen to retreat, but in reality they in no wise interfered with it, as their positions had very nearly remained the same. Napoleon wished to begin by destroying the army commanded by Blake. With this view he ordered Lefebvre and Victor to hold him at bay while he himself should advance towards Burgos. These marshals were then to drive Blake to the sea or to the slopes of the mountains which separate Biscay from Old Castile, a point towards which he intended to send Soult from Burgos in order to give a finishing stroke to the remnants of Blake's army. But the Spanish general forestalled his adversaries by attacking them himself. After the combat at Zornoza, Lefebvre had withdrawn in the direction of Burgos, where provisions were more easily obtainable, and to confront Blake had left only the Villate division in an isolated position at Balmaseda. Victor, sent to Orduño to support Lefebvre, never thought of repairing the fault of his colleague, and contented himself with sending a brigade to Oquendo. The Villate division, thus thrown on its own resources and attacked by superior forces on the 5th of November, was driven back to Bilbao, though not before it had fought valiantly and suffered severely.

The two marshals being severely reprimanded by Napoleon,[1] hastened to efface the impression produced by this unpleasant beginning. Lefebvre at once marched to Balmaseda, encountered a detachment from Blake's army at Guenês, defeated it, and formed a junction with Victor on the very spot formerly occupied by the Villate division (November 8). Victor then led the pursuit and plunged into the gorges of the Biscay mountains, following Blake, who was forced to retreat. Arrived at Espinosa, the Spanish

[1] Napoleon to Lefebvre, Nov. 6, 1808; to Victor, same day.

general collected all his army, which was reduced by the previous fighting and the want of provisions to less than 30,000 men, and determined to hold out in the strong positions afforded by the outskirts of that town. He there resisted Victor's attack with the utmost vigour on the 10th of November. But the battle being renewed on the following day, the effort proved too much for the strength of an army that was far from having the solidity and consistency of regular troops. When the Spaniards therefore, after much sharp fighting, beheld General Maison's division carry the heights at the point of the bayonet, which were the key of their position, they fled at the same moment; nor can aught else ever be expected from men who do not possess the bond of union which the habit of long service under one flag affords to veteran troops. The fugitives dispersed in all directions, and in one instant the army was dissolved. A large number were killed, but few taken prisoners, and Blake effected his retreat to Reinosa with a few thousand soldiers, destined to serve as a nucleus for rallying an army which no longer existed.

This was the moment when, according to Napoleon's promise, Soult ought to have advanced from Burgos to Reinosa, and there caught or destroyed the remnants of Blake's army. But, excellent as the plan was, its execution did not equal its conception, and the marshal was unable to move soon enough to obtain all the results Napoleon had anticipated. While Lefebvre and Victor were marching against Blake, Napoleon advanced from Vittoria to Burgos, thence to despatch his *corps d'armée* on the right and left to the rear of Blake and of Castaños. Burgos was defended only by the Marquis de Belvedere's weak detachment, amounting to about twelve thousand men. The marquis, nevertheless, marched forward to meet Napoleon at Gamonal, so as to obstruct his passage there. His troops sustained the first attack with great intrepidity, but the wood which covered their right having been turned by Lasalle's cavalry and then carried by the infantry of General Mouton, they all fled, retreating even more swiftly than at Espinosa. Our cavalry, who in this flat country had every

advantage in their favour, pursued the fugitives sword in hand, so that a regular massacre ensued, and all entering Burgos pell-mell, the town was given up to sack and pillage (Nov. 10).

Napoleon did not send Soult to Reinosa until the 13th of November. Had the marshal started on the 11th, as he might have done, he would have arrived there in time completely to annihilate Blake, but, in consequence of this delay, he did not reach it until the 15th. Meanwhile, however, he picked up several guns and prisoners on the way, but Blake himself had escaped two days before in the direction of Leon, by fearful roads along the base of the Asturian mountains Soult, having thus failed in his principal object, traversed the province of Santander and the principality of the Asturias in order to establish some semblance of submission, but it was a submission that would not last one minute after his army-corps left the localities he was then passing through.

The presence of the Emperor at Burgos in no degree softened the fate of that unhappy city, which for several days was delivered up to all the horrors of a town taken by assault. Napoleon, never swerving from his system of making examples, and wishing to subdue Spain as much by terror as by force of arms, shut his eyes to all the excesses which soldiers so readily commit when suffering from hunger, or left without control. The towns and villages situated on our march were laid waste as though they had been traversed by hordes of savages. As to Burgos, the abominations were such that the town was abandoned by its inhabitants. 'A sad sight!' exclaimed Miot, as he entered it on the 12th of November with King Joseph, whose counsellor and friend he was. 'The houses almost all deserted and pillaged, the furniture broken and scattered in the mud; one quarter beyond the Arlanzon on fire; a lawless soldiery bursting open the doors and windows, and breaking every impediment in their way, consuming little though destroying much; the churches robbed, the streets encumbered with dead and dying; in short all the horrors of an assault, *although the town had offered no resist-*

ance! The *Chartreuse* and the principal convents had been sacked. The convent of Las Huelgas, the richest and finest in Old Castile, had been converted into a stable; the tombs within the church and cloister had been opened for the sake of the treasures they were supposed to contain, and the bodies of the women which were in them were dragged in the dust and left on the pavement, strewed with bones and pieces of winding-sheets. . . . I saw, under the very windows of the archiepiscopal palace where Napoleon was quartered, a bivouac fire kept alive for a whole night by musical instruments and furniture taken from the houses. King Joseph tried to make some representations, but they were badly received.'[1]

The Emperor was not only determined to listen to no such representations, but he wished the administrative pillage to complete the good effects of the military violence. In consequence, he confiscated thirty millions worth of wool at Burgos in addition to the English merchandise found there.[2] But this was only a beginning. Under pretext of indemnifying the French residents for their losses, he resolved to lay hands on the immense property belonging to the grandees of Spain in the Peninsula as well as in other countries then beneath our sway: 'The duke of Infantado and the grandees of Spain,' he wrote to Cretet on the 19th of November, 'own, amongst them alone, half Naples. It were not too much to value their estates in that kingdom at two hundred millions. Besides, they have possessions in Belgium, in Piedmont, and in Italy, which it is my intention to sequestrate. *This is merely a first idea.*'[3] This glorious idea had been preceded on the 12th of November by a decree of outlawry against ten noblemen selected from amongst the richest grandees of Spain, and which, declaring them traitors and enemies of France, condemned them to be tried by a military commission and *passés par les armes.* This decree of outlawry was styled 'a decree of amnesty,' according to that ingenious nomen-

[1] *Mémoires* of Miot de Melito, vol. iii.
[2] *Moniteur* of Nov. 21, 1808.
[3] Napoleon to Cretet, Nov. 19.

clature which Napoleon applied to all his acts. By other arrangements the Emperor promised full and entire pardon to all other Spaniards who should make their submission within the space of one month from the date of our entry into Madrid. It was expected that this last clause would induce the Spanish people to regard as an act of clemency a cruel act of spoliation which was in reality but a fearful abuse of victory.

At the same time the Imperial bulletins poured forth calumny and insult on the Spanish troops as much as on the nation itself.[1] 'The soldiers of the insurrection were simply ridiculous braggarts, worthy compatriots of Don Quixote. Gross ignorance, silly presumption, cruelty towards the weak, compliance and cowardice towards the strong; this was the spectacle presented to our view! *The monks and the inquisition had brutalised this nation!* . . . The Spanish troops, like the Arabs, could only fight from behind houses; the monks were illiterate and intemperate; the peasants on a par with the Fellahs of Egypt; the rich degenerate, and without energy or influence.' General Romana was never mentioned in these bulletins but as the *traitor Romana.* The bishop of Santander, who had written against us, but with the utmost dignity and eloquence, was represented as 'a furious and fanatical man, of a diabolical turn of mind, and who always walked about with a cutlass at his side.'[2] Such was the usual picture drawn by Napoleon of the people whom he found it difficult to subdue. In remarkable contradiction, however, he endeavoured, on the other hand, to transform his insignificant skirmish at Gamonal into a signal victory; the twelve flags picked up upon that battlefield he sent with great pomp to the Legislative Body, and, in a word, was as triumphant as if Spain had been conquered at one blow.

This boasting, which was far from being cleverly done,

[1] It is not known why these bulletins have not been reproduced by the editors of Napoleon's *Correspondance.* Does the *Moniteur*, where they can be read, seem to them a suspicious authority?

[2] See the *Moniteur* of Nov. 16, 19, 21, 26, and 27; Dec. 2 and 4, 1808.

Napoleon intended for England, in the hope that she would be sufficiently deceived to make her resign herself to excluding the Spaniards from the negotiations. But the haughty and decisive rupture which terminated the parleys soon convinced him how useless were these tricks, and their only result was the abiding remembrance of his invectives amongst a people who never forgive an injury.

Blake's army being, if not destroyed, at least dispersed, Napoleon recalled Lefebvre's and Victor's corps, which had become useless in Biscay, and then instantly turned back against the as yet unbroken army of Castaños and Palafox. It had remained stationary, opposite to Moncey's corps, extending from Cintruenigo to Caparoso, on both banks of the Ebro. Before long however, in consequence of the representations of Castaños, who understood the danger of this position, it was concentrated in the neighbourhood of Tudela. The Emperor now desired rapid and decisive action. He appointed Marshal Lannes to the command of Moncey's corps, augmenting it to 35,000 men, and thus rendering it little inferior to that of Castaños, which scarcely numbered forty thousand. Anxious to achieve complete success, he had ordered Ney to execute the manœuvre against Castaños which Soult had conducted against Blake; but for this purpose he made him march a long way round, so as to conceal his object. At the same time, however, he gave him far too small a force; for Ney was sent to the rear to cut off the army of Castaños with but twelve thousand men. He was to advance from Burgos by Aranda and Osma to Soria, which was situated about twenty leagues in rear of the Spanish army; then, having reached that point, he was to march on either to Agreda or to Calatayud in order to strike a final blow against the troops which Lannes was to put to flight at Tudela.

The plan, no doubt, was very specious. But if, as was quite possible, Castaños should choose to retreat before being attacked, Ney would then find himself alone with only his twelve thousand men to confront an army numbering at least forty thousand, and according to general rumour amounting to sixty thousand; he would find himself isolated

and unsupported, in a rebellious country, and far removed from his base of operation. The manœuvre he was instructed to perform was of a most hazardous description, and the perplexity which he has been reproached for having felt on this occasion does as much honour to his military *coup d'œil* as to his patriotism.

Everything having been thus prepared, Lannes, at early dawn on November 23, marched on Tudela, where the Aragonese, commanded by Palafox, had taken up their position. The Spaniards were protected on their right by the Ebro; to the left their line stretched as far as Cascante where the Valencians and the Andalusians were encamped under Castaños. This exaggerated extension of nearly four leagues, which moreover left the centre almost bare of troops for the benefit of the wings, clearly indicated the natural tendency of the Aragonese to cover their capital of Saragossa, and that of the Andalusians to incline off towards the south. Lannes quickly punished them for these faults. He first took advantage of the long distance at which Castaños' corps stood, to direct all his force against the centre and the Spanish right. At the same time that his infantry, commanded by Maurice Mathieu, rushed in columns to the assault of the heights above the Ebro, Lefebvre's cavalry charged the Valencians of the centre in the plain, and threatened to turn them. This attack was boldly withstood by the right, and repulsed in the centre by a skilful manœuvre of Don Juan O'Niel. Lannes renewed it by sending the two divisions of Grandjean and Morlot against the centre, which made it give way. The Polish lancers at once rushed through the breach they had made, and their presence causing a panic amongst these inexperienced troops, they fled in the utmost disorder across the olive woods that here thickly cover the plain.

This occurred at the very time when the Aragonese, closely pressed by Maurice Mathieu, were beginning to lose ground on the side of the Ebro. At sight of the panic which left their flanks uncovered, they too withdrew, and began to retreat along the Saragossa road pursued by the cavalry of Lefebvre-Desnouettes. Meanwhile La Peña,

lieutenant of Castaños, had, though somewhat late, hastened from Cascante to assist the Spanish centre, which by that time was annihilated. This reinforcement, composed of excellent troops, at first repulsed the Musnier division sent against it by Lannes. Nor did it withstand the charges of our cavalry-reserve with less vigour. But attacked before long by the Lagrange division, which came to the help of its brethren-in-arms, the division of La Peña was, in its turn, surrounded, and driven back to Borgia pell-mell with the fragments of the defeated centre. Nay, more: it drew along with it in its flight the other divisions of Castaños, till turning in the direction of Calatayud it at length effected its retreat under the protection of nightfall.

The Spaniards lost at Tudela about four thousand men in killed and wounded, with almost all their artillery. Meantime Ney remained motionless at Soria, where he was in vain expecting the Spanish army that had retreated to Calatayud. He had arrived there on the 22d of November, at mid-day. By starting again on the same day he might have reached Agreda on the next, the 23d, as prescribed to him by an order from head-quarters. But that order, inexact, ill conceived, and dated at four o'clock in the afternoon of November 21, from Burgos, stated that the battle was *to take place on the 22d at Calahorra.* Ney could not, at the earliest, have received it until five or six o'clock in the afternoon of the 22d; and it must then have appeared too late to begin a march of twenty leagues in order to take part in a battle that would be over before he could start. Moreover, he was not yet free from his original anxiety as to the possible movements of the Spanish army, and in view of this uncertainty he deemed it more prudent to await events in the positions he had chosen. Napoleon himself bitterly reproached him for this inaction. But it was certainly not caused by faint-heartedness. Historians have regarded it as due to jealousy of Lannes, without reflecting that jealousy on such an occasion would have urged him rather to act with presumption and temerity. If he had appeared at Cascante towards the end of the day, he would have shared the honour of the victory with

Lannes, for, in such cases, it is he who strikes the *coup de théâtre* who produces the principal effect.

The battle of Tudela terminated the first act of the presumed submission of Spain. Of the four armies which had wished to bar the entrances to the Peninsula to us, there only remained,—on the left about eight thousand men who had with difficulty reached Leon under Romana, Blake's successor; in the centre, a feeble reserve of Belvedere's corps, which was now preparing to hinder our passage of the Guadarrama; lastly, on the right, the remnants of the army of Andalusia and Valencia stealing away from Calatayud to Sigüenza, sharply pursued by Maurice Mathieu, and later by Ney. As to the Aragonese, they had shut themselves up in Saragossa. The English army had not yet succeeded in effecting its concentration. Its principal corps, conducted from Lisbon by General Moore, had, it is true, reached Salamanca on the 13th of November; but the bad news which he there received of Blake's army made him feel the necessity of reuniting his scattered forces before advancing into Old Castile. Moore had in consequence to wait for his cavalry and artillery, which he had sent by the easier roads of the Tagus valley, from Almaraz to Talavera, before he could proceed to meet his lieutenant, Baird; who, on his side, having started very late from Corunna, had not yet reached Astorga.

This state of affairs allowed Napoleon to advance straight on to Madrid, without any fear of his communications being interrupted. Soult's corps—then about to join Junot's which had entered Spain—was left on the confines of the Asturias and Old Castile; Lannes was placed in front of Saragossa, and Mortier, then at the Pyrenees, had orders to march on to Burgos. His left was covered by Ney's corps, called forward to Guadalajarra, his right by Bessières' cavalry which overran the plain as far as Segovia; and thus at every point he displayed to the Spaniards a force four times as strong as theirs. Starting from Aranda on November 28, he reached the foot of the Guadarrama on the 30th, with his guard, his reserve, and Victor's corps.

Don Benito San Juan, on whom devolved the duty of

guarding the gorges of the Somo-Sierra with the remnants of the Estremadura army, had posted an advance-guard at Sepulveda, consisting of three thousand men; but on the appearance of our troops they dispersed in different directions. He himself remained at Somo-Sierra with eight or nine thousand soldiers and sixteen guns, which swept the road. He had distributed his troops cleverly enough in rifle corps to the right and left of the route; but considering the number of assailants his arrangements were none the less insufficient, as he had not even taken the necessary precautions for preventing our cavalry charges. Napoleon, after making a reconnaissance of the enemy's positions, sent some infantry regiments on the flank of the Spaniards, and dislodged their riflemen. When this infantry had, with some difficulty, cleared the immediate borders of the road, instead of attempting to take the battery in the centre by an assault that might have proved long and sanguinary, he resolved to capture it by means of the cavalry. General Montbrun, to whom this bold manœuvre was entrusted, executed it in a most dashing manner: he charged at full gallop, at the head of the Polish light horse, received a volley on the way which cost him some thirty men, but in a few moments reached the battery, put its gunners to the sword while standing beside their guns; and the Spaniards fled along the slopes of the Guadarrama in full retreat towards Segovia.

Madrid was now uncovered. The central junta, then at Aranjuez, precipitately quitted that town for Talavera, first sending to the capital the few troops and small resources still at their disposal. Far from seeming dejected by so many reverses, the inhabitants of Madrid were determined to defend their town to the last extremity. They repaired their walls, unpaved their streets, put mattresses in the windows of their houses, dug ditches in front of the gates of the town, and cut trenches across their streets. The command of their forces they entrusted to Thomas de Morla, former Governor of Cadiz, who passed for an educated and experienced officer; they then enrolled their grown-up men as volunteers, and distributed arms and ammunition

amongst them. Unfortunately these scenes of patriotic excitement were not altogether free from those acts of violence which so often accompany great popular emotions. Sand having been found instead of powder in some of the cartridges, the administrator, the Marquis de Perales, was accused at once, and though no evidence of his having manufactured them was forthcoming, he was seized by the people and assassinated.

On the 2d of December, at early morn, the French army took up a position under the walls of the town, and Napoleon sent in a summons to open the gates. His proposal being received with contempt, he at once began preparations for an attack. The difficulty for him was not that of taking Madrid, for with the small means at their disposal the inhabitants of that town were absolutely incapable of making any serious defence, and our artillery alone was sufficient to reduce it to ashes; but he wished to avoid the odium of destroying so great a capital. It was a question, therefore, of leading them on to surrender by alternately employing menace and persuasion, and above all by demonstrating the inutility of resistance. On the 3d of December, Sénarmont opened fire with thirty pieces of artillery against the Retiro, a position which completely commands the town, and of which the Spaniards did not understand the importance. At the same time their attention was drawn off to another side by several secondary attacks against the gates of Alcala, of the Recollets, of Atocha, and of Fuencarral. These were withstood with remarkable intrepidity by the citizens of Madrid, but our artillery opened a large breach in the Retiro, which was quickly taken by the Villate division, and many of the gates then falling into the hands of our troops, their defenders were forced to retire behind the barricades that closed the entrance to the streets.

The population wished to continue the combat, but their chiefs, better able to appreciate the uselessness of a long resistance, were discouraged, and answered a fresh summons from Napoleon by asking for an armistice which would allow the general excitement to subside. General de Morla

and Don Bernardo Yriarte proceeded to head-quarters in the hope of obtaining better conditions, but Napoleon overwhelmed them with reproaches, and above all attacked De Morla in unmeasured terms for his conduct after the Baylen affair: 'How dare you ask for a capitulation?' he exclaimed. 'You who have violated that of Baylen? To violate military treaties is to renounce all civilisation: it is putting yourself on a level with the Bedouins of the desert!'[1] General de Morla might have asked him in what manner military treaties, which, after all, only affect an army, could be more inviolable than diplomatic treaties that concern a whole nation, and which he was so fond of trampling under foot. He might have asked him if this strict *cultus*, based exclusively on military law, had always been respected by the man who now declared himself its apostle. But deeply troubled by these outbursts of anger in a man on whom his life depended and whom he knew to be capable of anything, he remained silent. Napoleon granted the Junta a delay of some hours to surrender. At six o'clock next morning he signed, with some slight modifications, the project of capitulation which the envoys brought him, and his army took possession of Madrid.

His troops had no sooner entered the town and disarmed the inhabitants, than he made haste to show in what respect he himself held those military treaties, the sanctity of which he had so loudly proclaimed. Making a pretext of some isolated acts of insubordination, impossible to prevent in a large capital, and especially amidst such agitation, he wrote to Belliard, who had been appointed governor of Madrid, 'to ignore the capitulation throughout, since, as it had not been adhered to by the inhabitants, *it was null and void*.'[2] He notified to the officers and Spanish generals that they were prisoners of war, contrary to the terms of the capitulation, which stipulated (Article X.) 'that those generals who might desire to remain in the capital should retain their honours, and that those who might not wish to remain should leave it without hindrance.' The Spanish troops,

[1] Sixth bulletin from the army of Spain.
[2] Napoleon to Belliard, December 5.

fortunately, had quitted Madrid during the night preceding the capitulation. He then abolished the Council of Castile, publicly branded its members as cowards and traitors, and imprisoned them, in violation of Article VI., by which he had engaged to maintain the laws, the customs, and the *tribunals* in their existing form, until the definitive organisation of the kingdom. Finally, he sentenced to perpetual confinement the prince of Castelfranco, the Marquis de Santa Cruz, and Count d'Altamira, in defiance of the most formal clauses of the capitulation, on pretence of their having been included in the famous *decree of amnesty*. Those who had not been included in that decree were, however, no better protected from his vengeance; he condemned to death the Marquis de St. Simon, grandee of Spain, under pretext of his being a French *emigré*. So universal, however, was the disapproval which this iniquitous sentence excited in his own camp, that he consented in the end to spare his life, and contented himself with sending him off to France with a number of other influential Spaniards, whose only crime was that of having remained faithful to the cause of their country.

Finding it useless any longer to favour the privileged classes whose acquiescence he had failed to win in spite of the advances he at first made to them, he at length inaugurated his programme for the regeneration of Spain by a series of dictatorial decrees.[1] One abolished feudal rights; another, the tribunal of the Inquisition; a third, the custom-house duties existing between the provinces; a fourth reduced the number of convents by one-third. Excellent in themselves, these measures became odious even to those who most ardently desired them, from the mere fact of their being imposed by a foreign despot; and, far from fulfilling their aim, the only effect they produced was to invest with a temporary popularity the classes and institutions which, under the reign of Charles III., had lost nearly all their influence.

Napoleon took up his quarters at Chamartin, the seat of the duke of Infantado, one of those grandees whose property he had confiscated. He made a short visit to

[1] Dated December 4, 1808.

Madrid, but instead of the inhabitants evincing that curiosity which he was accustomed to see produced elsewhere by his appearance, the reception he met with was, to his extreme displeasure, of a frigid and hostile character. In place of running to look at the hero, the Spaniards shut themselves up in their houses. During this excursion he visited the palace of the kings of Spain, and, it is said, that amongst all the precious objects of art in the royal residence, that which fixed his attention most was the portrait of Philip II. by Velasquez. He gazed at it for a long time in silence, and as if he never could turn away from it; either because he was trying to penetrate the mystery of that living enigma, or perhaps was filled with an admiration mingled with envy for the inquisitorial king who exercised more absolute and more dreaded power even than his own. A few days afterwards he afforded the inhabitants of Madrid an opportunity of witnessing one of those military reviews which invariably attract crowds, but the performance took place in complete solitude. Such malignant and persevering indifference denoted an intractable population. Madrid, he felt, was decidedly a dangerous residence; and, always attentive to his personal safety, the Emperor preferred the neighbourhood of his camp to contact with a capital which contained so many fanatics.

Joseph had followed in his brother's wake, with the baggage of the army. Although deeply humiliated by the obscure part he was made to play, he nevertheless had accompanied Napoleon to Chamartin; there, however, their disputes became so bitter that he was obliged to move to the Pardo. He still considered himself king of Spain, and in this capacity he claimed, not without some show of reason, to have a voice as to the manner in which his subjects should be brought back to their duty, and to give his opinion on measures of which he would have to bear all the responsibility. Napoleon, on the contrary, would recognise no rights but those of conquest; he was master either to keep them or to transmit them anew, and he even publicly stated in his manifestoes 'that if the Spaniards did not respond to *his confidence*, no course would

remain open to him but that of placing his brother upon another throne. He would then put the crown of Spain on his own head, and he would know how to make the *wicked* respect it, for God had given him the strength and the will to surmount every obstacle.'[1]

Underneath this personal question, which Joseph might have passed over, differences of a far more serious nature lay hidden, which were in fact the true cause of the coolness between the two brothers. In spite of the rather artificial ambition with which Napoleon had inspired him, Joseph was of a humane and kind disposition. He wished no doubt to reign over the Spaniards, and, if need be, to conquer his kingdom; but he flattered himself that he could gain their hearts by clemency, gentleness, and generosity. He had scruples in regard to honesty and justice, and no less faith in the ultimate triumph of inexhaustible good humour. It might perhaps be an illusion, but at least it was not the illusion of a madman. Joseph not only had a natural and sincere horror of the confiscations, exiles, imprisonments, and murders, which cost his brother so little, but he also considered them impolitic measures, fitted only to destroy his cause, and accordingly he wearied Napoleon with his protests. The Emperor shrugged his shoulders with pity when he had to listen to these complaints; no excess, no crime, was repugnant to him for the purpose of subduing Spain; he was quite as Utopian in his cruelties, nevertheless, as Joseph was in his meekness, but as a question of one chimera or another that of Napoleon was far less practical, for each crime only increased the hatred of which he was the object.

It has been said that, in thus treating his brother as a cypher—and thus more than once exposing him to the derision of the army—Napoleon was only actuated by the magnanimous desire of taking all the odium of the conquest upon himself, and afterwards leaving to Joseph the honour of showing clemency, which would then have become easy. This fancy, so little answering to his

[1] Proclamation of Dec. 7.

character, is untenable in presence of the correspondence of King Joseph and the confidential communications of his friends. Napoleon did not require to be told that the Spaniards made his brother jointly responsible with him for all he did in Spain, a fact known to every one as well as to him. But Joseph's unceasing representations were a never-ending annoyance to him, hence the true reason why he would not allow him any real influence. At length, after the decrees of the 4th of December, matters came to such a pass that Joseph resolved to withdraw from a position which he considered dishonourable.

'Sire,' he wrote to Napoleon on December 8, 'M. d'Urquijo has communicated to me the legislative measures taken by your Majesty. Shame overpowers me in presence of my pretended subjects. I beseech your Majesty to accept my renunciation of all the rights you have given me to the throne of Spain. I shall always prefer honesty and probity to power so dearly purchased.'[1] This letter, so highly honourable to Joseph's memory, proves how Napoleon's policy was viewed, when seen on the spot, even by a brother and a witness whose interest it was to judge it leniently. Unfortunately, Joseph failed in determination; moreover, he was swayed by that passion, which, like a Nemesis, seizes and becomes ingrained in men who have once reigned; and he never had the strength of mind to persist in a resignation which he offered and retracted by turns, with equal signs of repentance.

In spite of his threats of dividing Spain into military vice-royalties and of governing it himself as a conquered province, Napoleon could not do without his brother, or at least not without his name to conceal his own authority. It was necessary, in fact, to leave to Spain the semblance of a national existence, were it only as the pretext of a rallying-point for those classes—everywhere numerous enough, but especially so in towns—whose dependent and precarious positions do not allow them the luxury of an opinion. In consequence, he announced his intention of

[1] *Mémoires* of King Joseph, vol. v. See also the *Mémoires* of Miot de Melito, vol. iii.

reinstating Joseph on the throne of Spain, so soon as they should give him proofs of submission, and for this purpose he, in an underhand manner, instigated a proceeding on the part of the municipality and the heads of the clergy of Madrid. Nor was it difficult, impatient as were the Spaniards to be delivered from the onerous burden of a military occupation, to prevail upon them to come and ask for the restoration of a king who promised them some relief from their woes. They therefore presented themselves before Napoleon on the 15th of December, and implored of him 'the favour of seeing King Joseph in Madrid, so that under his rule the capital and the whole of Spain might enjoy that tranquillity and happiness which they expected from the gentle disposition of his Majesty.'

In reply to this address Napoleon delivered a long defence of the reforms he had effected; he recalled those decrees for which the Spaniards had shown themselves so ungrateful, and enumerated the benefits that Spain was destined to reap from them. But what, he said, was altogether beyond his power, was to form a nation of the Spaniards under the orders of the king, if they continued to be imbued with a desire for separation from, and feelings of hatred against, France. However, he would not refuse *to yield his rights of conquest to the king* and to establish him in Madrid, provided the inhabitants would manifest their sentiments of fidelity and give an example to the provinces. They must, therefore, prove the sincerity of their submission by '*taking an oath, which should not proceed from their lips alone, but likewise from their hearts, in presence of the Blessed Sacrament.*' In virtue of this conclusion, as singular as it was unexpected, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for several days in the churches of Madrid, and the people were there admitted to take the oath of allegiance to King Joseph. It is a never-ending source of astonishment to behold what a degree of confidence men have in the efficacy of an oath who, more than any others, have themselves most frequently broken it, and what simplicity they display in flattering themselves that a ceremony only used by themselves as a medium of deceit should be

regarded as an irrevocable and sacred engagement by others.

If the Spaniards could have entertained the slightest illusion on the subject of the *liberal constitution* which, according to the Imperial allocution of December 15, was to be the reward of their docility, they had but to open the French *Moniteur* of the same date to learn the nature and extent of the liberties promised to them. The *Moniteur* of December 15, in fact, gave a definition, drawn by Napoleon himself, of the model *régime* he had bestowed on France, little likely to excite the envy of foreign nations. When, on the receipt of some flags taken from the enemy, the Legislative Body deputed some of its members to convey an address of congratulation to the empress, Josephine replied, 'I am very pleased that the Emperor's first thought, after victory, should have been for *the Body that represents the nation.*' Napoleon had been much irritated previously by a slight opposition manifested in this assembly to an article of the *Code* of criminal instruction. He had bitterly complained that, 'instead of voting by ballot against the law, the opponents of the measure had neglected to demand a secret committee in which each one should state his opinion,—a process which would enable him to see *by the reports if they had been right or wrong.*'[1] The Emperor for the first time regretted the silence to which he had condemned them, now that he perceived how this muteness foiled any attempt at denunciation on his part. It was too soon to forget that these parliamentary reports had been a source of unhappiness to the speakers; but the members of the Legislative Body were blessed with better memories.

On being informed that the empress had treated men as representatives of the nation who had not dared to give a reason for their votes, so completely had he lowered and degraded them, Napoleon gave way to one of those outbursts of anger in which he indulged whenever the rights he had usurped were appealed to before him. The *Moniteur* recalled the deputies to a sense of their nothingness and made the thunder roll over their humbled heads.

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, November 27, 1808.

'Her Majesty the empress *never said that*,' this peremptor notice affirmed; she knows our constitution too well; she knows too well that *the first representative of the nation is the Emperor.* In the order of our constitution, the Senate comes after the Emperor, the Council of State after the Senate, the Legislative Body after the Council of State. . . . The Convention and the Legislative Assembly were representative; such was our constitution at that time; and the president even disputed precedence with the King. . . . Now *it would be an absurd and even a criminal pretension to seek to represent the nation as prior to the Emperor.* The Legislative Body, inappropriately designated by this name, ought to be called the Legislative Council, for, having no right to propose laws, it has no right to make them. *It is nothing but a reunion of mandatories from the electoral Councils.*'

In truth the essential features of that constitution which he wished to uphold to all Europe as an immovable and absolute type of perfection consisted in a servile and trembling Senate composed of his creatures, a Council of State composed of active and docile instruments, a Legislative Body reduced to the *rôle* of a registry Chamber, and, towering above all these phantoms, a man, the representative of the nation, tribune and dictator in one, invested with the triple power of constituting, legislating, and governing. It was no small matter to have so quickly made this degrading theory a reality in the full light of Christian civilisation, and in the middle of an enlightened age; but, to propose it thus for the admiration of mankind was rather overstepping all bounds; for, although the Cæsarism of the proceeding might have been accepted as a sad and temporary necessity, yet no one could regard it as a normal or lasting system. The author of this anachronism alone seriously believed in his dream, he alone thought of carrying out to the end this exhumation of everything belonging to the decline of the Roman empire. His thoughts lived in that narrow circle and could not quit it; he revived its names, its institutions, its manners; he sought for analogies to it to such a degree that he never could speak even of

Dupont's disaster without comparing it with that of *Sabinus Titurius;* in short, he dwelt with delight in those fearful ages, the remembrance of which is a nightmare to every free-minded man. Even at the very time that he was letting so many scourges loose upon unfortunate Spain, he sent Cambacérès a plan—with an inconsistency only suited to the brain of a demented Cæsar—for a *temple of Janus*, to be built on the summit of Montmartre, *and where the first solemn announcement of peace should be made.*[1] It seemed to him that the erection of a temple of Peace, at the time when he was doubling the conscription by bringing it up to a hundred and sixty thousand men, ought to be an unanswerable proof to every Frenchman of his conciliatory intentions; and so far, it must be confessed, he had not presumed too much on the credulity of a people who are led by words. This temple was to cost from twenty to thirty millions. As this large amount might injure the popularity of the monument, Napoleon hit upon the equally Roman idea of levying it exclusively from the class of electors which then numbered no more than thirty or forty thousand active members. By this new means he calculated on imposing a sum varying from one to three thousand francs on each of these *Curiales.*

Napoleon had now been about twenty days at Madrid, but had taken no steps as yet to defeat the English army. Certain it is that, if he had marched according to his usual method, a few days after his arrival in the capital, straight after the English in pursuance of his victory, he would have placed Moore's army in the greatest danger. It was not until the first days of December that the latter received his artillery and cavalry, brought to him by his lieutenant, Hope, from the valley of the Tagus across the mountain chain separating the two Castiles, and he had not yet been able to effect his junction with General Baird. Moore was a chief, prudent as well as brave; he was adored by his army, and his most severe judges have never reproached him with any fault but too great a distrust of himself. He had experienced those disappointments in Spain which

[1] Napoleon to Cambacérès, November 26, 1808.

await a commander in the midst of an unorganised insurrection. At Salamanca he learned, one after the other, all the disasters of the Spanish army. Profoundly discouraged by the disorder, want of discipline, and inertness of the auxiliaries he had counted upon, irritated by their alternate boasting and dejection, too weak, moreover, with his twenty thousand men, to undertake any serious enterprise himself against an army of such superior strength, Moore, a prey to the most painful perplexity,[1] at first decided on quitting his advanced post at Salamanca and retreating into Portugal, leaving an order for Sir David Baird to retire to Corunna. Soon afterwards, however, at the request of the Spanish generals and of Frere, British Envoy to the central junta, he consented to march to Valladolid, to the intense joy of his soldiers, who were longing to fight,[2] and with the view of making a diversion in favour of the insurgents of the West and South. But in thus deciding to attract Napoleon's forces towards himself in the North, he was obliged to sacrifice his communications with Portugal and to change his line of retreat, which henceforward should be directed towards Corunna instead of Lisbon.

In his march to Valladolid, Sir John Moore intercepted a message from Napoleon to Soult ordering him to go to Leon and to drive back Romana's corps into Galicia. In consequence of this information Moore turned a little to the left on the road from Toro to Benevente to support his allies against Soult, and on the 20th of December he effected his junction with Baird at Majorga, which brought his forces up to five-and-twenty thousand men.[3] Happily for us Soult had remained in the neighbourhood of Carrion, and he was enabled to retire before the English, who advanced as far as Sahagun (December 22).

Such then was the situation of the English army when

[1] Proof of this is to be found in every page of his correspondence and of his journal.

[2] *Story of the Peninsular War*, by the Marquis of Londonderry.

[3] This amount is certain, allowing for deduction of the troops left in Portugal or at Lugo, and of the sick in the hospitals. It is taken from the *official return of Moore's army*, dated December 19, 1808, inserted in the *History of the Peninsular War*, by Napier.

Napoleon decided on attacking it. The number of his troops in the Peninsula had gone on increasing, as Junot's and Mortier's army-corps advanced, one upon Burgos, the other on Saragossa, where it was to reinforce Moncey; our soldiers had even gained some fresh advantages over the Spaniards, and yet, far from our embarrassments being over in the Peninsula, they seemed to be recommencing. The submission of Madrid had produced anger and indignation in the provinces. The armies of the insurrection, though repulsed on so many points, seemed to recruit themselves by flight as ours did by victory. Every one who escaped alive from the field of battle enrolled himself sooner or later over again. In a short time there was not a single Spaniard capable of bearing arms who had not served successively in five or six different armies. By death would it alone be possible to subdue the country, and Napoleon did not shrink from this very logical consequence of his enterprise. But it was not easy to put it into practice with an enemy so clever at stealing away. In this manner an army reappeared in a few days of which the bulletins had announced *the total destruction.* Blake's army, annihilated at Espinosa, now numbered ten thousand men in Castile, and almost as many in the Asturias under Romana. That of Palafox, shut up in Saragossa, held two corps, those of Moncey and Mortier, in check; Castaños and his division, so closely pursued at Sigüenza, had fallen back on Cuença in strong positions under the duke of Infantado, and his numbers increased perceptibly; finally, that of Estremadura, on the point of breaking up from the result of its own excesses after Somo-Sierra, and disgraced by the murder of its general, San Juan, had been restored to order by Galuzzo, who occupied Almaraz on the Tagus.

This fresh state of uncertainty, after successes which had apparently been so decisive, was perhaps in reality the true cause of Napoleon's delay in assuming the offensive. Accustomed to close in upon his adversaries and thus destroy them, he felt somewhat disconcerted by the evasive ways of an enemy that disappeared the moment he tried to catch him. At any rate, having been informed on the 19th

of December that the English were marching on Valladolid, he understood by that alone that their line of retreat must have been changed, and almost instantly detected Moore's plan. 'Everything leads me to believe,' he states in a note left for Joseph, 'that they are evacuating Portugal and directing their line of operation on Corunna. But in making this retrograde movement they may hope to inflict a check on Marshal Soult's corps.'[1]

This latter idea was, it is true, a most natural temptation for one in the position of Sir John Moore, who might otherwise find himself obliged to retreat without an engagement; and Napoleon hoped that he might yield to it. If so, we should have had time to attack his communications and to cut him off from Corunna. The Emperor had eighty thousand men in the neighbourhood of Madrid. Half of these he took with him, and the other half he left with Joseph,[2] after having fortified the Retiro and converted it into a regular intrenched camp. Joseph kept Lefebvre's and Victor's corps with two divisions of cavalry—quite sufficient to repulse any attack—while the Emperor took with him Ney's corps, the Imperial Guard, and strong reserves of artillery and cavalry. The defeat of the English seemed, in his opinion, certain, and there is no doubt that they would have had the greatest difficulty in escaping if they had allowed themselves to be placed between these forty thousand men and Soult's corps. 'I am starting this moment,' he wrote to Josephine on December 22. 'I am going to outmanœuvre the English, who appear to have received their reinforcements and *wish to play the swaggerers*. The weather is fine, my health perfect—do not be uneasy.'

On the evening of that same day he crossed the Guadarrama on foot, amidst a fearful snowstorm. The weather, hitherto so fine, had become bad, but had no effect in slackening the rapidity of our movements. On December 25 Napoleon was at Tordesillas, not far from

[1] Notes for Joseph, dated December 22, 1808.

[2] Notes for Joseph, dated December 22, 1808. On this point it is necessary to reduce Napier's calculations, generally so just. He asserts that Napoleon led an army of 50,000 men against Moore.

Valladolid, thoroughly convinced that he was about to surprise and capture the English army: 'Have it put into the newspapers,' he wrote to Joseph, 'that 36,000 English are surrounded, that I am in their rear, while Soult is in their front.'[1] A few days afterwards it was necessary to change the tune.

Warned by Romana of Napoleon's march, Sir John Moore, who was at that moment preparing to move towards Saldañha, there to attack Soult (December 23), at once saw the necessity of immediately retreating if he wished to avoid being caught between two fires. He managed the matter with as much skill as decision. His most direct road to Corunna was the Mansilla route, but it was so encumbered by the equipages of the Spanish army that he retrograded quickly to Benevente, there blew up the bridges on the Ezla, and commenced his retreat to Astorga (December 26). Our advanced guard was still at Medina de Rio-Seco. Moore hurried on his troops, leaving a cavalry corps at Benevente under Lord Paget to keep off ours. When Lefebvre-Desnoettes approached that town with his light horse, he found the bridges broken, and made four squadrons ford the Ezla. They were met and put to the sword by the enemy's cavalry, and Lefebvre himself was made prisoner just as he was on the point of being drowned in the river.

Napoleon was obliged to acknowledge that his calculations had been baffled. Instead of cutting them off he could now do nothing but pursue the English on their line of retreat. His ill-humour vented itself in abuse. 'The English had not only destroyed the bridges, but they had blown them up by undermining them with powder, *barbarous conduct*, most unusual in war! Consequently they were looked upon with horror throughout the country.' We here see how scrupulous this great man became with regard to barbarism, when he passed judgment on the conduct of his adversaries. But the real barbarism which he could least pardon them was having escaped his clutches. Since he had lost all hope of taking them, their army no longer consisted of 36,000 men, but of 25,000. 'Their real strength,' he wrote, 'is from twenty to twenty-one thousand infantry,

[1] To Joseph, December 27, 1808.

and from four to five thousand cavalry.' And he added: 'They owe a debt of gratitude to the obstacles presented to us by the passage of the Guadarrama and the *infamous mud* we have encountered!' The mud of Poland had passed into a proverb, thanks to the bulletins, but the mud of Spain was an invention rather more difficult to credit.

The chief difficulty of Moore's retreat henceforth arose less from the pursuit of the French army than from the absence of provisions and the bad state of the roads. Our cavalry, commanded by Bessières, pressed him closely, but Ney's corps had barely reached Benevente when the English had already passed beyond Astorga. Soult advanced rapidly from the moment that he defeated a Spanish rear-guard at Mansilla, to whom was assigned the defence of that passage; but he was not strong enough to risk any serious engagement with the English, although he did them much harm by harassing them unceasingly. As far as Villafranca, their sufferings, though great, were endurable. But when they had to cross the snow-clad mountains which separate Villafranca from Lugo, provisions almost entirely failed. In order to procure them they were obliged to burst open houses, and the army soon fell into indescribable disorder. On the road they left drunken men, wounded and stragglers who were too weak to go on farther, amongst these latter a number of women and children; the baggage was abandoned and destroyed as it could not be carried; more than £30,000 in gold was thrown over the precipices; they slaughtered horses by hundreds because they could no longer feed them; in short, they escaped complete destruction, solely by a march of extraordinary rapidity, which enabled the army to extricate itself quickly from these terrible defiles and to recruit its strength at Lugo (January 5, 1809). Hitherto Moore had been undecided whether to choose Corunna or Vigo for his line of retreat; but at Lugo he saw the necessity of fixing upon Corunna, as it would afford him greater facilities for embarkation.[1] Napoleon had halted at Astorga. He has himself, in a

[1] Letter from Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore to Viscount Castlereagh, January 13, 1809: Ann. Reg.

letter of that period, assigned as reason for so doing that by following the movements of his army farther he should have found himself at twenty days' distance from Paris. On the other hand, rumours current in the army stated that, after having received and read his despatches on the 2d of January at Astorga, he had remained sunk in deep thought for some moments, and then had given orders of departure for Benevente, without communicating with any one. Hence sprang the very generally received opinion that news of a grave nature had reached him that day, which obliged him to return to France. Without disputing the truth of the little scene of reading the despatches, which is attested by trustworthy witnesses, we believe that Napoleon's decision ought to be attributed to very different motives. In the first place no new incident had occurred either in France or in Europe, which could have caused this change. Austria, it is true, was continuing to arm as she had been doing for several months past, but she was still far from being ready to commence war. As to the influence assigned to Fouché's and Talleyrand's intrigues, the hypothesis rests simply on unimportant gossip. Nothing was going on in Paris which could give Napoleon the slightest uneasiness. No! His real motive in halting was, that he no longer perceived any way of hindering the embarkation of the English. The decisive blow which he had announced with so much clamour had failed, and he did not care to go forty or fifty leagues farther, over horrible roads, merely to witness their escape and to bring back as the only trophy of so toilsome an expedition three or four thousand stragglers vanquished by fatigue rather than by the sword. He left this unenviable kind of success to Marshals Soult and Ney, and returned himself to Valladolid.

Sir John Moore had quitted Lugo on the evening of the 8th of January, after having in vain offered battle to Soult during two consecutive days. On the 11th he reached Corunna and thus approached the termination of that difficult retreat which he had conducted with so much firmness and prudence. An overwhelming surprise there awaited him. The ships for the embarkation of his troops

had not yet arrived. He received the news without flinching, and made every preparation for giving battle to the French, who had happily been delayed on the road. On the 14th of January, Moore's transports appeared in sight off Corunna. Then, emerging from his state of inactivity, Soult endeavoured to oppose the embarkation of the English. He engaged them in a long and sanguinary combat during the whole of the 16th, but never succeeded in taking a single one of their positions. The English embarked their last man before leaving Corunna, but their two generals, Moore and Baird, were wounded, one mortally and the other severely, at the very moment that the deliverance of that army was effected which they had saved by their perseverance and courage. 'You know,' said Moore to his friend Colonel Anderson, just as he was about to expire, 'you know that I always wished to die thus . . . I hope the English people will be content!'[1]

Napoleon had left Valladolid for Paris on the 17th of January 1809, without even waiting to hear the result of Soult's and Ney's pursuit. So far back as the 1st of January he had foreseen that he could not succeed in preventing the embarkation of the English; that was the real motive of this sudden resolve to go no farther. All that has been written on this question as to the pretended possibility of overtaking them on the road, and the fault committed by the two marshals in favouring the enemy's flight by their slowness, falls to the ground before the simple words addressed to Soult in the Emperor's name by Major-General Berthier, on the 1st of January 1809: 'Marshal!' he writes: 'the Emperor, foreseeing the embarkation of the English, has dictated instructions for the last operations of the duke of Elchingen and yourself. He commands that, *when the English shall have embarked*, you shall march on Oporto, etc.'[2] When the Emperor admitted

[1] J. C. Moore: *Life of Sir John Moore.* Lord Londonderry: *Story of the Peninsular War.* Southey: *History*, etc. Napier: *Histoire de la Guerre de la Péninsule*, translation and notes by General Mathieu Dumas, etc.

[2] Berthier's despatch to Soult. Memoirs of King Joseph.

that he looked upon this retreat as an 'accomplished fact' so long before it had been effected, it necessarily follows not only that it was very probable, but that it had a thousand chances to one in its favour.

Nothing was definitely settled in Spain when he chose to return to France. The English army sailed away from Corunna, but it was very probable that it would return by sea to Portugal where it had left a detachment of nearly ten thousand men. This direction had also been taken by Romana's army, which though suffering severely had not been destroyed. At other points of the Peninsula resistance was far from being crushed. Lannes had undertaken the direction of the siege of Saragossa. He carried it on with cool and inflexible energy, but nothing as yet indicated that he would conquer the indomitable resolution of its inhabitants. That town alone occupied two of our army corps, those of Moncey and Mortier. On the other hand Victor had defeated the army of the duke of Infantado at Ucles and driven it back on Valencia, but there was little gained by this success. Saint-Cyr, who had entered Catalonia in the beginning of November, had succeeded in raising the blockade at Barcelona, by means of one of those methodical and scientific campaigns in which he excelled, but although he had beaten the Catalonians in several encounters, he was far from having subdued that province. Andalusia, in fine, so fatal to our arms, was still intact, as well as nearly the whole of the South of Spain. In one word, we had, so far, done nothing but traverse the country as conquerors, without establishing ourselves solidly in any part of it; and while we crushed the revolt on one point, it broke forth immediately on another.

Taking for granted that the subjugation of the Peninsula was feasible even by Napoleon's genius, and by employing all the resources at his command, it was essentially a work of patience and of abnegation, one that promised neither grandiose and striking effects nor any immediate results. It was an undertaking which could not be successfully carried out without a mixture of gentleness and severity, requiring,

at the same time, slow and skilful measures; above all demanding great perseverance, calmness, and wisdom; in short, something very much like that pacification of La Vendée which had done such honour to General Hoche, but presenting far greater difficulties from the number of the population, the extent of the country, and the intensity of the national hatred. Nothing was more antipathetic to Napoleon's natural character than such a *rôle*, or more at variance, especially, with the good and bad qualities which success had developed in him. This patient and delicate task was not compatible either with his theatrical manners, with the violent sallies of his despotic temper, or with the impression which he wished to convey of his omnipotence and infallibility. He resolved, therefore, to leave it to his lieutenants, certain that in case of success he would reap all the honour, and in case of failure on them alone would fall the responsibility.

In order to give a colouring in the eyes of Europe to his return to Paris, which it was difficult to account for after those manifestoes in which he had so pompously announced *that he was going to plant his eagles on the towers of Lisbon*, he wrote under date from Valladolid itself, on the eve of his departure, a series of most bellicose circulars to the princes of the Germanic Confederation.

Having no fresh fact with which to reproach Austria, yet wishing at the same time to attribute his departure to provocation on the part of that power, he made use of articles that had been published by the newspapers of Vienna and Presburg to prescribe to his Confederates a menacing attitude towards the court of Vienna. He announced to them that, without withdrawing one single man from his army in Spain, he was ready to move towards the Inn with 150,000 men. He told them to prepare their contingents: 'Russia,' added he adroitly, 'is indignant at the extravagant conduct of Austria. This spirit of giddiness and folly,—the forerunner of the ruin of states,—is inconceivable to us. Can it be that the waters of the Danube have acquired the property of those of Lethe?'

He fancied that he might indulge in this provocation

without bringing on immediate war, which he wished to begin at an hour of his own choosing. It was clear that he intended to avenge himself upon Austria for the doubtful success he had achieved in Spain. His prestige, so seriously injured by Baylen and Cintra, could not be restored amid the slow proceedings and long uncertainties of the Peninsular War. He determined, therefore, to re-establish it at the expense of Austria, now so long accustomed to be beaten. Insensibly, he adopted the same policy towards Spain which he had done with regard to England; and was beginning to say to himself that he would defeat Spain in Europe.

Before quitting the Peninsula he left Joseph some political and military instructions. The military contained the plan of a campaign in Portugal and in Andalusia, but the political instructions were much more summary and greatly simplified since the check he had experienced in his reforms. The burthen of their song was of a most sinister description, and was repeated in all Napoleon's letters to Joseph at this period: 'I am not pleased with the Madrid police;' he wrote to him on the 10th of January from Valladolid; 'Belliard is too weak; with the Spaniards it is necessary to be more severe. *I have had fifteen of the worst arrested here and shot.* Have about thirty of them arrested at Madrid. *When they are treated with kindness, the rabble think themselves invulnerable. When a few of them are hung, they begin to take a dislike to the game, and grow humble and submissive as they ought to be.*'[1]

On the 12th of January he reverts to these recommendations, and expresses his satisfaction that Belliard had begun to put them into practice: 'Belliard's *operation* is excellent. *It is essential to hang about twenty of the worst characters at Madrid.* To-morrow I shall have seventeen hung, amongst those most known for every sort of excess. . . . Unless Madrid is freed from some hundred of these firebrands, nothing will have been done. *Of these hundred have some twelve or fifteen hung or shot, and send the rest to the galleys.*

[1] Letter inserted in the Memoirs of King Joseph, but not reproduced in Napoleon's *Correspondance*.

I had no peace in France, nor did I restore confidence amongst people of property, until I had two hundred of the firebrands and assassins of September arrested and sent off to the colonies. From that time forward the feeling in the capital changed as if by magic.'[1]

On the 16th of January he again laid down these precepts of lofty policy, the better to impress them upon the gentle-hearted Joseph. 'The court of the Alcades of Madrid has acquitted, or only condemned to imprisonment, some thirty of those scoundrels whom Belliard had arrested: *a military commission must be appointed to try them again and to have the guilty shot.* . . . Here, every effort has been made in vain to obtain mercy for the bandits that were condemned. I refused it, *I insisted on the hanging, and I was convinced that in the bottom of their hearts the petitioners were very glad not to have been listened to.* I believe it necessary, especially at first, that your government should show a little vigour with this rabble. The rabble like and respect only those whom they fear; and fear of the rabble can alone make you loved and respected by the whole nation.'[2]

Finally, he desired him to take out of the convents and houses that were confiscated at Madrid some fifty of the masterpieces of the Spanish school, which were wanting, he said, to the collection in the Museum of Paris.[3]

The advice contained in these fraternal effusions constituted in reality the whole programme of the Imperial and Royal policy. Such was Napoleon's farewell to the people whom he declared himself called upon to *regenerate!*

[1] Memoirs of King Joseph.
[2] Memoirs of King Joseph.
[3] Napoleon to Joseph, January 15.

CHAPTER II

RUPTURE WITH AUSTRIA—BATTLE OF THE FIVE DAYS—SECOND CAPTURE OF VIENNA—ESSLING

(*February–May* 1809)

HAVING started from Valladolid on the 17th of January 1809 the Emperor arrived at the Tuileries on the 23d of the same month. It has often been repeated that the intrigues at Paris contributed, quite as much as the armaments of Austria, to this sudden return, which took every one by surprise. Such at least were the pretexts which he was pleased to allege in explanation of his abrupt departure from the Peninsula; but whoever seriously believes interpretations which it suited him to give of his conduct, must have but a false conception of his character. His true motives could not be mentioned by Napoleon. He could not confess that he, who in eight days had destroyed the military power of Prussia, felt humbled, nay exasperated, by having spent nearly three months in Spain without having been able to subdue a resistance he never spoke of but with the utmost contempt. In fact, it was nothing more than a repetition of his conduct in leaving Boulogne, accompanied by less impatience to make war, no doubt, yet by an equal desire to seem to be provoked to it. The false appearances, however, of which he so cleverly knew how to avail himself in order to seem constrained to quit a country which he was longing to leave, do not bear close investigation. Austria's preparations were proceeding but slowly; aggression on her part, which Napoleon was hastening by his own threats, was far from being imminent, and

the pretended intrigues in Paris soon dwindled down into inoffensive gossip.

There had been, it is true, as happened every time the Emperor left France, rather more liberty in conversation, and rather less timidity amongst the discontented. In spite of that Chinese wall which his policy had erected round France, a few rays of light had eventually illumined those events in Spain which he wished to envelop in impenetrable obscurity; and the public, too demoralised to condemn them as they deserved, nevertheless ventured to criticise an enterprise which success did not seem to sanction. The great mass of the people certainly began to complain of the conscriptions by which they were decimated, but there their grievances ended. A few of the high functionaries of the Empire, uneasy at seeing their positions thus endangered, joined these critics, albeit discreetly, others discussed the inevitable question as to what should be done if the Emperor were to fall in Spain; a forethought that was only natural, in view of the implacable hatreds that existed amongst the Imperial family.

But these murmurs had little echo outside the coteries of the *salons*. At that time there was neither press nor parliament to give them the publicity they ought to have had. The Legislative Body was, no doubt, assembled, but although little satisfied with the state of affairs, it never raised its voice except to give utterance to base adulation. By observing it very closely, however, an almost imperceptible symptom of its secret dissatisfaction might be discerned in the somewhat considerable number of opposition votes with which the project for the code of criminal instruction had been received. It was sufficiently courageous one day to reject an article of law, but immediately retired frightened at its own temerity.

In addition to this great event another incident was noted, of no less menacing a nature, according to the opinion of certain alarmists interested in making a show of their zeal. This was the reconciliation which had taken place between Fouché and Talleyrand, who had been open enemies for a long time past. These two personages were

not exactly the sort of men to allow themselves to be taken unawares by events, and they therefore had held many long conversations. They perceived the necessity of a good understanding, and of concerting some common plan of action in case of the Emperor's death; and it was asserted that Murat, Napoleon's own brother-in-law, had before starting for Naples approved of all their plans, in the hope of profiting by them at some future day through his popularity in the army.[1] Nothing was more probable than that confidential communications of the kind should have been exchanged between men desirous of preserving their great political position, and who all had had more or less cause to complain of the Emperor's behaviour. They were naturally suggested by the dangers of the present and the uncertainty of the future; and were merely a feeble repetition of what had been discussed under similar circumstances at the period of Marengo, of Eylau, and even of Austerlitz. But these confidences had not gone beyond the limits of private conversation, and unless he had declared himself immortal, it is impossible to see how Napoleon could pretend to prohibit them. In fact, their authors were so far from dreaming of their ever coming into operation during Napoleon's lifetime, that the one who would have to act the principal part, King Murat, was actually at Naples—a spot singularly ill chosen for conspiring at Paris.

The very importance which was assigned to this idle gossip of the ante-chamber proves how few acts of any serious nature could be brought forward; and, if Napoleon made so much noise about it, it was because, at that moment, he required to find fault at any cost with some one or other, in order to palliate the injurious effect of his precipitate return. Amongst the many suggestions he borrowed from the age of the Cæsars, he had taken care not to forget that of informers. The system of denunciation was one of the great springs of the Imperial *régime;* it was

[1] On this subject see, in the *Journal* of Stanislaus Girardin, a conversation with the Empress Josephine, under date of February 24, 1809, evidently recorded on the day itself.

declared to be the duty of every official of the Empire, from the senator to obscure members of the University.[1] The Emperor, moreover, employed many of the police, principally in informing upon each other. Fouché, whose office it was to watch over others, was himself more closely watched than any one. The Emperor, therefore, soon knew in its minutest detail the secret of the reconciliation effected between his Minister of Police and his Grand Chamberlain. He reached Paris in that state of bad humour, or rather of sullen wrath, in which he had been ever since the day when he found himself forced to relinquish all hope of capturing the English army. This temper had betrayed itself at Valladolid by torrents of invectives against the Spaniards, against his generals, his soldiers, and even his own brother. His feelings, therefore, being in accord with his schemes, which urged him to mark his return by some striking effects, it cost him no effort to appear at Paris as an irritated master in the midst of trembling servants.

Finding it difficult, however, to bring formal accusations against these two men without proofs, he confined himself to censuring the general tendency of their political conduct, and referring to facts of public notoriety, such as the remarks Talleyrand had made on the question of the war in Spain. In a council composed of the ministers and grand dignitaries he reproached Fouché with the respect he purposely showed to partisans of the old *régime*, the little vigour of his administration, and the almost factious direction he imprinted on public opinion; for, from the fact of his own success in the art of deceiving nations, Napoleon had come to look upon opinion as a force, the movements of which could be regulated by governments as they pleased. Public opinion in his estimation had a kind of current value, which ought to be manufactured at the Prefecture of Police. That branch of the administration, having all news, both home and foreign, under its control over the entire surface of the Empire, besides information of every sort, and journals

[1] This obligation was inscribed in the Statutes of the University (Art. 46). For the part concerning the senators see the third volume.

wherein to propagate it; having, moreover, not only the sovereign power of altering facts, but also of inventing them at will, it followed that a public opinion which was merely the result of information derived from all these combined sources could be nothing but a production manipulated by the police. This reasoning was most correct, but it presupposed one very essential element besides, namely, the faith of the public in the sources of the information thus transmitted to them. That faith, however, had by this time been much shaken.

The worst part of the storm fell upon Talleyrand. Ever since he had been so singularly invested with 'the honourable mission of surrounding with pleasures and surveillance' the dethroned Spanish princes, the Grand Chamberlain had more and more severely condemned the Spanish affair, in which he found himself henceforth implicated against his will by so vexatious a share. All his reasons for disapproving of an enterprise which was repugnant to his good sense, if not to his morality, had been lately added to by a personal disgrace calculated to embitter a mind so sensitive to ridicule. According to a rumour then widely circulated in Paris, it was believed that although Talleyrand had accepted the mission of amusing his guests at Valençay most reluctantly, Madame de Talleyrand had entered into it warmly, and had seconded the Emperor's intentions far beyond her husband's wishes. This rumour, whether true or false, had not contributed to reconcile Talleyrand to plans he had never approved of except under constraint, and, according to his habit, he had revenged himself for his misfortune by some of those charming *mots* in which wit was only so much grace added to sound sense. Napoleon, in violent language, called him to account for these remarks and for other expressions of censure attributed to him; he reminded him, not without exaggeration, of the part he had taken in the negotiations with Izquierdo, and reproached him with having dared to blame the execution of the Duc d'Enghien after having counselled it. Did he go so far as to accuse him of having *counselled it in writing?* There is no testimony relative to this famous scene but the recollections gathered

from the conversations of the duke of Gaeta,[1] which is most insufficient as authority. Until it is proved that the phrase was ever pronounced, it cannot be right to cite it as an irrefragable proof of Talleyrand's complicity in the murder of the Duc d'Enghien. Even supposing that Talleyrand had acted a part in that tragedy which was contrary both to his character and his interests, he was not such a novice as to leave proof of it in writing; nor, had such writing existed, was Napoleon the man to let it go out of his hands.

But even if the words attributed to Napoleon really were spoken, they constitute testimony of very little value, if it be borne in mind that the slightest protest on Talleyrand's part would have ruined him irremediably, without in any way availing towards his justification. How could he have defended himself against the man who accused him? Before what tribunal could he summon him for calumny? He knew, on the other hand, what dangers he might create for himself even by a simple denial. To brave them would have required courage such as Napoleon's most valiant generals rarely showed themselves capable of. Talleyrand remained silent. He received a volley of reproaches, mingled with menaces and insulting expressions, without a word in reply — with that cold impassibility which was his manner of evincing dignity. Imperturbable and careful to give no opportunity which, in his anger, might be grasped at by his powerful adversary, he studied only to avoid the danger without trying to argue with him, as a man does when battling with one of the elements, and thus could have conquered and surveyed him from the lofty eminence of his calm bearing. When all was ended he made a low bow and walked away. Napoleon, who struck him at the moment with pleasure, experienced a sort of moral impossibility of doing so with advantage after a scene which filled with consternation those who witnessed it. He contented

[1] Especially by Meneval and Thiers. Gaudin, moreover, was not present at the scene any more than Mollier, who also speaks of it from hearsay in his *Mémoires d'un Ministre du Trésor* (tom. iii.) Mollier does not say a word of the accusation relative to the Duc d'Enghien.

himself with depriving Talleyrand of his key as Grand Chamberlain and giving it to M. de Montesquiou, but the eminent diplomatist none the less kept his appointment of Vice-Grand Elector. He concealed his vexation beneath an outward semblance of perfect ease, seemed to retain no recollection of the insults aimed at him, and presented himself again at the Tuileries in an attitude that was submissive certainly, but at the same time neither one of constraint nor of zeal, as if he felt that the court could not exist without him, and that he was born a great dignitary, indispensable to the country, if not to the Emperor.

Fouché retained his functions as Minister of Police, for it would not have been easy to replace this precious man. He had the advantage over his younger competitors of having betrayed every party since 1793, and he began to meditate the addition of one more act of treachery to his state services. Failing to reach him, the Imperial thunder fell upon a woman who was attached to the new *régime* by her appointment at court, and to the old by her ancient lineage. Madame de Chevreuse had once escaped exile owing to Talleyrand's intervention, then all powerful; now she was included in the disgrace of her protector, and ordered to banish herself to the distance of forty leagues from Paris. She was accused of having indulged in some feminine witticisms, and of having refused to fulfil the duties of Lady of Honour to the former queen of Spain. 'Let the De Luynes take care!' exclaimed the Emperor on this occasion. 'If they annoy me, I will revise the confiscation of Marshal d'Ancre's property, and heirs shall not be wanting to claim his spoils from them!' As to Murat, protected by distance, he only felt a weak rebound of the master's anger. Champagny was desired to reprimand him on the subject of the decorations belonging to the order of the Two Sicilies, which he had permitted himself to confer upon Frenchmen without the authority of the Emperor, 'which was *supremely ridiculous*.'[1] The Minister at the same time had to enjoin this sovereign instantly to send back to France those whom he had enrolled in the order.

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, January 24, 1809.

Having thus gratified his ill-humour, his resentment, and his offended pride, he grew impatient to prepare for that war which he had rendered almost inevitable. In fact, even if Napoleon had sincerely wished to prevent it, which he did not, it was very late to recede after the irritating demonstrations which had filled to the brim the measure of the old or the more recent grievances of the Cabinet of Vienna. The circular addressed to the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine was one of those direct menaces beneath which no power can bend without losing all influence and all prestige. Austria, moreover, was the more sensitive to this threat because it was the last limit to a long series of humiliations, and because the court of Vienna had done nothing to provoke it. She had, no doubt, continued to arm noiselessly, with a view to placing herself in a military point on a level with all her neighbours,—a step the right and necessity of which she had justly asserted; but in doing this she had never transgressed her privileges as an independent power, nor could she be reproached with any proceeding which could have caused the manifestoes from Valladolid. Napoleon himself was now forced to admit to his confidants the falsity of his accusations. Immediately on his return to Paris he wrote to Eugène that '*Austria is not making the movements which we supposed;* however, one must be on the alert!'[1] 'Which we supposed,' meant to say, such as it pleased him to suppose when he wanted a pretext for leaving Spain. But, whether just or not, the provocation had been given, and it was necessary to sustain it; above all, the appearance of the first wrongs should be thrown upon Austria, and in that particular Napoleon excelled.

Amongst historical commonplaces there is hardly one so widely diffused as that which imputes the responsibility of the war of 1809 to 'mad aggression on the part of Austria;' nor is there perhaps any one more false or unwarrantable. The Emperor Napoleon knew perfectly well that, in the opinion of those who are incapable of discernment—and they form the immense majority even amongst those who

[1] Napoleon to Eugène, January 26, 1809.

are called *gens d'esprit*—it is always he who fires the first shot that is looked upon as the originator of the rupture. Consequently, therefore, he neglected nothing which might tend to strengthen this thesis of provocation by Austria. His diplomatic proceedings with Alexander especially were intended to prove that he wished to avoid war, yet at that very moment he made it inevitable; and it may be said with perfect truth that no government ever had been driven to it by more inexorable necessity than the Cabinet of Vienna in 1809. No one, as a rule, examines anything regarding this point except the more or less subtle quibbles of the diplomatic notes exchanged at the last moment; but this is lowering the discussion to puerile proportions. The necessity for the war of 1809 was not the sudden consequence of a collision between the two rival powers; it originated in the peace of Presburg, at a period when, by an unworthy abuse of victory, and contrary to the advice of his wisest counsellors, Napoleon had taken from Austria at one stroke four of her provinces and a quarter of her population.

After this iniquitous and short-sighted treaty, which forced Austria, as a condition of her safety and a law of her existence, to watch for the hour of revenge, did Napoleon even make any effort to win back the friendship of this power by kindness? He had achieved her ruin by constraining her, through ill-concealed menaces, to join the continental blockade. He had at Tilsit publicly paraded his intention of excluding her from all great European affairs. He who would not have suffered Austria to touch a village on the Danube had, without consulting her, disposed successively of Prussia, Portugal, Spain, Tuscany, of the Papal States, and finally of Moldavia and Wallachia, provinces situated on the Austrian frontiers, as if these were questions that did not concern her, as if Austria had become a stranger to Europe, as if such enormities in no wise endangered either her safety, her interests, or her honour! Nay more; these encroachments, which so clearly predicted the fate sooner or later reserved for herself, had been accompanied by intolerable affronts. Not only had she

been excluded from Erfurt, but a courteous act on her part had been met by insolent remonstrances. Finally, when she had begun to arm, in order to protect herself from such insults, she had received what was almost tantamount to an order to stop; and was asked, moreover, to sanction all the disgraceful proceedings which had roused the indignation of Europe, by recognising Joseph as king of Spain. And now, after being driven into a corner, after having had the sword forced into her hand by a successive series of affronts, she was accused of desiring to go to war! It was adding irony to bad faith thus to reproach her with disturbing the peace of the world. Full and entire pardon, however, was promised, provided she would consent to disband her troops. But, even if the Emperor Francis could have made up his mind to submit to such a humiliation, he might just as well at the same moment have signed his own downfall.

It was presuming rather too much on the ignorance and credulity of the public to expect them to believe that the actual attitude of Austria towards France was, as Napoleon[1] expressed it, that of the *lion with the lamb;* but in this respect he considered anything possible, and it must be confessed that he was authorised to do so by the marvellous success of his charlatanism. He resolved, in consequence, to maintain great apparent reserve henceforth towards this power, whilst pushing forward his own preparations for war and continuing his diplomatic intrigues. In order to make the court of Vienna responsible before Europe for the rupture he had himself provoked, he planned a grand demonstration by France and Russia, by which these two Powers should offer to guarantee to Austria the integrity of her territory if she would consent to disarm. This guarantee of integrity was a formula singularly ill chosen to reassure the court of Vienna, for every one was aware how prodigal Napoleon had been of a similar guarantee to Turkey, and how little advantage it had brought the Turks. But after so solemn an offer, could Europe any longer doubt his desire to preserve peace? And if Austria, intimidated, should withdraw in consequence of this joint proceeding;

[1] Napoleon to the king of Würtemberg, March 17.

if, contrary to all expectation, she should submit in order to avoid war, Napoleon said to himself that, after all, there would always be sufficient time to make this diplomatic defeat almost as striking and decisive as a military disaster.

Romanzoff, the ambassador of Alexander and defender of the French alliance, of which system he considered himself to be the inventor, had not quitted Paris when the Emperor returned there. Napoleon saw him and made every effort to please him; he overpowered him with attention and presents; but, above all, tried to imbue him with his political views before sending him back to St. Petersburg. Alexander, he said, had so far been the sole gainer by the alliance; the time had now come to pay his price for it and to prove his gratitude. Was he going to demand very painful sacrifices from him? No! what was required from him was chiefly some energetic demonstration. Had this demonstration been made a little sooner it would have been sufficient to prevent the court of Vienna harbouring the idea of making war. Even now her thoughts might be turned away from it if they spoke to her in language free from ambiguity, for a cabinet so famed for its traditional prudence would never venture to undertake a contest against the united armies of France and Russia. It was necessary, therefore, to give weight to their words by an imposing display of military force, and if Austria refused to yield she should be crushed by the simple advance towards each other of the two giants.

Nothing could be clearer than these propositions, or more difficult than openly to contest them. Neither the engagements nor their efficacy could be denied, and there were but very weak arguments to invoke with a view to evade their execution. On the other hand, the objections which could not be mentioned were as strong as they were numerous. Alexander had had a thousand proofs that Napoleon had not decided upon keeping the promises he made at Tilsit, until forced thereto by embarrassments which had affected his position; he therefore felt completely dispensed from gratitude, and had only to regard his own interest. In what way then did his interest counsel him to

interfere for the purpose of terminating embarrassments which were so advantageous to him?

On the contrary he had everything to gain by their increase. In adopting this line of conduct he was only putting into practice the maxims Napoleon had so often preached to him; he sacrificed a 'policy of fancy' for the only great, the only true policy, 'the policy of interest.' It was easy to see that a great triumph over Austria would at once suggest the idea to Napoleon of taking back what he had given. But that was not all; the Emperor of the French manifestly now intended to strike a fatal blow at that monarchy. For whose benefit would he destroy it? Most assuredly not for the benefit of Russia. To whom would those Polish possessions of Austria return, which in Napoleon's hands might become so dangerous a weapon against Russian domination?

Thoughts of this kind, so natural in Alexander's position, were not calculated to inspire him with very ardent desires in favour of our cause; yet, on the other hand, he could not wish to see us defeated without risking the loss of the reward of his past civility. He was not yet firmly established either in Finland, where his troops, badly commanded, had been several times beaten by the Swedes, nor yet in the Principalities, which Turkey, once more on friendly terms with England, was preparing to contest with him vigorously; therefore, should any great disaster befall Napoleon, Alexander might find himself forced to renounce these much-coveted provinces.

Distracted by these different feelings the Czar could only act in an undecided and equivocal manner; yet he never had been offered the opportunity of playing a finer part than on this occasion. Now, and now only, that moment was drawing near which had been the dream of his life, for without any doubt he was 'the arbiter of Europe.' Napoleon seemed to wish to proclaim this himself by the noise he made about the concurrence of Alexander and about his armies. He seemed to rely more on the effect of this menace than upon the terror he himself inspired. We could do nothing any more, in fact, without the Czar's

permission. Obliged to carry on war upon the Danube whilst half our forces were occupied upon the Tagus, the folly of our policy had placed us at his discretion. It depended upon him to rouse the entire Continent against us. Germany, quivering, urged without intermission by its thousand secret societies, only waited for a signal to rise from Hanover to the Tyrol. The king of Prussia had come to St. Petersburg with the queen in December; he had been unceasing in his assurances of attachment, and, with the ardour of despair, would have seized on the opportunity for a fresh struggle. The emperor of Austria had recently (in February) sent Prince Schwarzenberg to the Czar to endeavour to bring him back to the European cause which he had deserted after having served it with honour. England only asked to be allowed to receive him with open arms. Turkey even, who, with much clamour, had just broken off from Napoleon after having discovered the treachery he had been plotting against her at Tilsit and at Erfurt, would easily have been induced to fight against us. If, at the same time, we consider that all the other countries subject to our domination, such as Holland, Switzerland, and Italy, were thoroughly wearied of it, and that we then had two hundred and fifty thousand men in Spain, it must be acknowledged that all the elements of a coalition existed strong enough to prevent or to crush all resistance.

These elements Alexander held in his hand, and by one word might have unloosened them; this, however, he could do but on one condition, that of showing himself disinterested! By repudiating the benefits offered him he might be ungrateful, not only without remorse, but with the certainty of being blessed as a liberator and of leaving a great name in history. If beneath the cold ashes of his youthful illusions Alexander had preserved one spark of his original ambition in the depths of his heart, he must have felt, with bitter regret, that by neglecting this invaluable chance merely for the purpose of securing ill-gotten possessions, he was a second time untrue to himself and to his destiny. A most just retribution it was that gave him

many causes to repent of his weakness, both in the war of 1812, and, later, when he saw himself deprived of the greater portion of those spoils which had tempted his cupidity. Perhaps this recollection may have been the source of the melancholy that haunted his latter years. But when a man has had a great opportunity, and has not known how to seize it, he for ever loses the right to complain of fortune.

Alexander chose a part more in conformity with his indolent and artificial nature. At once unwilling to renounce the advantages afforded him by Napoleon's alliance and reluctant to contribute to the defeat of Austria, he decided on remaining as much as possible a mere spectator of the combat. When Caulaincourt communicated to him his master's desires he skilfully set aside the idea of a joint note to the court of Vienna as inopportune and dangerous, but promised to use every effort to divert their thoughts from war. As to his military co-operation, he disputed neither the obligation nor its propriety, but he did not conceal that it must be of a very trifling nature in consequence of the embarrassments and dangers caused him by the inconvenient presents he had received from his august ally. He had a war on hand in the North with Sweden, he would soon have to encounter the united forces of Turkey and England in the South; this was much for an exhausted Empire, where moreover public opinion was far from favourable to the French alliance. All that he could do for us would be to concentrate an army corps on the frontiers of Gallicia. These promises were realised, at least in part, with ostentatious zeal. Prussia was warned that she must submit to remain quiet, and that she could not break with France without breaking with Russia. Prince Schwarzenberg received declarations that were no less discouraging. He had been commissioned by his court to ask the hand of the Czar's sister in marriage for one of the archdukes; it was refused to him, and the refusal moreover seasoned with the gravest remonstrances on the imprudent conduct of the Cabinet of Vienna. But, while thus prodigal of counsels and warnings, Alexander

abstained from adopting that threatening and determined attitude towards Austria which alone would have made her relinquish the idea of war.

Thus an intervention failed, which, as might easily have been foreseen, never could have been efficacious, because it never could have been thoroughly sincere. It is difficult to believe that a mind so keen and penetrating as Napoleon's could have much relied on this mode of preventing a rupture, when he was himself apparently doing all he could at Paris to affront and exasperate Austria. For a long time past he had studiously avoided addressing a word to the ambassador Metternich; he made his journals insult the court of Vienna,—provocations, the source of which could not be mistaken, as it was well known that the editors were the police; he commanded the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine to sequestrate the property of all those who should not return within thirty days (Feb. 15), and he desired them to make their troops take up military positions along the boundaries of their respective territories (Feb. 21). His thoughts, therefore, were no longer of peace, or if perchance slight notions of preserving it flitted now and then across his mind, they were alone caused by occasional doubts as to the issue of the new enterprise he was about to embark in. He flattered himself, however, that he would drag Alexander on much farther than he wished to go, and, he said to himself that, once the Czar had personally compromised himself in the negotiations, he would no longer have a pretext for refusing to support him.

But, too much in the habit of guarding against surprise to rely altogether upon any one except himself, Napoleon made all his preparations for war as if his troops alone were to encounter Austria, and that their numbers equalled, if they did not exceed, those at the disposal of that power. At the outset he estimated that he would require four hundred thousand men to subdue her; and from the moment he decided on this abrupt evolution he made his first military arrangements at Valladolid. The Guards instantly received orders to retire towards France. He likewise recalled from Spain several cavalry regiments,

which would be more useful on the large plains of the Danube than in those mountainous regions where they often were nothing but an encumbrance. At the same time Joseph was desired to send back some of the most distinguished chiefs of the army in Spain, amongst others, Monbrun, an incomparable cavalry general; Lasalle, one of the youngest heroes of the army; Marshals Bessières and Lefebvre, men of action and of tried bravery, but more useful in battle than in council, and consequently more in their proper place under Napoleon's direct orders than in Spain, where the generals, having to be left henceforth most frequently to their own guidance, would have to trust to their own inspirations.

A long-expected event soon occurred which enabled Napoleon to recall that general whom of all others he most wished to keep near him. On the 20th of February 1809 the inhabitants of Saragossa, half-buried in dust beneath their walls, and vanquished by a horrible epidemic far more than by our arms, surrendered the smoking remains of their city to Marshal Lannes, after a defence, the recollection of which will live in the memory of mankind for ages, when the names of the most celebrated victories of that period shall have faded away. Upwards of fifty thousand men perished during the two sieges. As our attacks had been carried on chiefly by mining and heavy artillery—by mathematical rather than physical strength—our losses were considerably less. This was an additional motive for showing indulgence towards the survivors. The eyes of the entire world were fixed upon them, lost in admiration. They had pushed courage to frenzy, in some instances vengeance even to cruelty; they had shown every sort of fanaticism merged in one alone; but never were ruins watered with blood that had been poured forth with such dazzling heroism. Never were soldiers, forsaken by the fate of arms, more worthy of the respect of their conquerors. It must be regretted that Lannes knew not how to honour his victory by a generosity as complete as the misfortunes of these glorious foes were great. He treated the defenders of Saragossa as if they were a band of brigands caught in their den. In spite of

a capitulation, very summary it is true, yet in due form, and signed by his own hand, expressly guaranteeing 'security to life and property' (Art. VI.), he had two of the leaders who had most aided the resistance executed, and gave up the corpse of the dead town to the excesses of his soldiery.

French historians have always denied the existence of this capitulation, while, on the other hand, it is asserted with extreme vehemence by English and Spanish historians.[1] What is certain is, that its text was printed in full in the *Gazette de Madrid* of the 11th of March 1809, in consequence of representations from the Junta of Saragossa; and in King Joseph's correspondence, under date of the 27th of February 1809, a word can be read which seems to settle the discussion: 'Sire!' he writes to his brother, 'I have received the *deed of surrender* of Saragossa.' This deed of surrender could be nothing but the document we allude to, for no deed is drawn up for a town which surrenders at discretion.

However this may be, the defenders of Saragossa stood in no need of a capitulation. They should have been for ever sacred to any man possessing the heart of a patriot or a soldier. So true is this, that even King Joseph could not resist paying homage to their courage in the official report he published of the siege, an act, however, which was soon visited by a sharp reprimand. On March 11 Napoleon wrote to him: 'Brother! I have read an article in the *Gazette of Madrid* which gives an account of the taking of Saragossa. It praises those who defended the town. Truly this is singular policy! *Certain it is, that no Frenchman exists who has not the greatest contempt for those who defended Saragossa.*' This at least is what he would have wished, for this great searcher after glory had reached the point of believing that honour or disgrace no longer

[1] See amongst others on this point the *Histoire du Siége de Saragossa*, by Général Rogniat; the *Défense de Saragossa*, by Manuel Cavallero; Robert Southey, *History of the Peninsular War;* Toreno; and the *Mémoire sur le second siége de Saragossa*, by Pedro Maria Ric, himself the negotiator (in the *Coll. suppl. des Mém. relatifs à la Rév. Française*).

existed except through him, and that one and the other were to be weighed according to the sentiments evinced towards him. To restore the balance the Emperor branded the intrepid young man who had been the life and soul of this immortal defence with the epithet of coward. 'That man,' said the *Moniteur* of March 2, 1809, when speaking of Palafox, 'is *an object of contempt* to the whole of the enemy's army, where he is accused of presumption and of *cowardice*. He was never seen in posts of danger.' And a few days later 'Palafox's life is despaired of. *That man is detested by the town*.'[1] Found dying at Saragossa, Joseph Palafox was taken to France by his orders, and confined in the fort of Vincennes, where he remained a prisoner until the fall of the Empire, treated like a criminal for having defended a cause the most just that can be imagined. Such ignoble reprisals against fallen foes who were an honour to their age have, for the most part, passed by unperceived, and it would be committing a strange mistake to suppose Napoleon capable of ever having experienced the faintest regret for such acts; yet did the author of so many crimes, when himself a captive at St. Helena making so much display of his martyrdom and wearying Europe with his lamentations on the subject of a bottle of wine refused to him for his table, never behold flitting across his recollections the stoical figure of the young defender of Saragossa?

In view of all these facts it is allowable to suppose that Lannes, in the merciless severity with which he treated the vanquished, was not following his personal sentiments, but rather obeying instructions that must have been repugnant to a man of such true courage. The episode, nevertheless, remains as a stain upon his memory. When obeying the Emperor's summons back to France, Lannes took with him a fame henceforth tarnished, and a life of which the days were already numbered.

These reinforcements, withdrawn from the army of Spain, constituted but a small portion of those which Napoleon proposed to send to the troops he had kept in Germany

[1] *Moniteur* of March 8.

under the orders of Marshals Davout and Bernadotte. The two conscriptions he had levied in September 1808 were still nearly intact; the one in advance of 1810, the other consisting of those who had escaped the conscriptions of the preceding years, together amounting to one hundred and sixty thousand men. He organised them at once, by means of the regimental staffs and of the depôts—a species of abyss ever open and capable of being enlarged indefinitely.

He thus brought his infantry regiments up to three thousand men present under arms, which presupposes an effective strength of nearly four thousand; his cavalry regiments to a thousand men, presupposing twelve hundred. Finding a great deficiency of officers, however, to command troops of this new formation, he had recourse to certain expeditious measures which have in no small degree contributed to his renown as an organiser, but which, according to all probability, will be regarded with less admiration by posterity than by the present generation.

He first instituted a kind of conscription by favour amongst the young students of from seventeen to eighteen years of age in the military schools, by virtue of which these children were promoted before the fixed time, or, in other words, were allowed to shed their blood before the usual age. He took a hundred and sixty-eight from Saint-Cyr, as many from La Flèche, fifty from the Polytechnic school, and fifty from that of Compiègne. This result not appearing to suffice, he extended the operation to all the lyceums of the Empire. These establishments were then forty in number; therefore ten pupils from each lyceum brought him 'four hundred *caporaux-fourriers* to send to the regiments.'[1]

It was then necessary to fill up the gaps produced in the military schools by this ingenious device. Little could be expected, in this regard, from the spontaneous zeal of any family, for measures of the kind were not exactly calculated to induce fathers to send their children thither. But Napoleon's genius for organisation quickly found a

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, March 8, 1808.

remedy. At the period of the campaign of 1806 he had struck upon the idea of forming companies of Guards of Honour, especially destined for the enrolment of young men of rank who might be attracted, it was hoped, by the prospect of Imperial favours. This creation, pre-eminently intended for the old aristocracy, had however met with little success. Napoleon now restored it under another form, by substituting compulsory for voluntary enrolment. He ordered Fouché, in consequence, 'to draw up for him a list of ten families in each department and fifty in Paris,' taking care that it should be composed of *those ancient and rich families who were not in the system.* Such of their children as were above sixteen and under eighteen years of age were to be sent by force to the school at Saint-Cyr. 'If they make any objection,' added the Emperor, '*no other reason is to be given except that such is my good pleasure.*'[1]

These words were the exact formula of the old *régime;* but it would have been necessary to go back very far, and to unite many fearful epochs in one, in order to find anything in them which could equal this collection of measures. It seemed as though they had been systematically combined by a scientific hand with the intention of extinguishing the intellect of France, and of poisoning the source of her vital strength. They no longer robbed her only of a robust generation of peasants and artisans who formed the body of the nation, but they attacked her very heart and brain; they selected with jealous care from amongst the forms of the college and the school that chosen youthful band, that precious reserve which composed the literature, art, science, and civilisation of the future; and before its education was finished they tore it away in its bloom, fresh from the maternal embrace, to send it to be slaughtered on the battlefield.

France was bleeding to death; nevertheless, were these two conscriptions and these supplementary recruits all that the country could give? Napoleon's piercing eye soon discovered new additions which he could make to these

[1] This letter of Dec. 3 is one of those which it has not been thought proper to insert in the *Correspondance* of Napoleon.

contributions towards the blood-tax. By ordering an extra levy of eighty thousand for each of the four years prior to 1808, he had brought up their regular contingent to a hundred thousand men; was it not, therefore, a flagrant injustice to require only eighty thousand for 1810?

The principle of equality, so dear to the French, imperatively demanded the abolition of so crying an abuse. He consequently increased the quota for the year 1810; but, by raising it from twenty to thirty thousand men, he destroyed the equilibrium anew; this again ennabled him to demand a fresh supplement of ten thousand conscripts for the Imperial guard for the years prior to 1810. Complaint could not be thought of, for they were rather favoured than otherwise, as the contribution demanded was only of ten instead of forty thousand men, the number strictly requisite to restore the balance. But this favour was of evil omen, and bade them be prepared for other calls.

All these arrangements were made and carried out by Napoleon without consulting even the Senate. They were submitted to it later, although this too was in direct violation of the constitution of the Empire,[1]—but its sanction was not asked until the Emperor was actually fighting the Austrians in the valley of the Danube.[2] Measures of the kind were, in fact, not practicable, except when done secretly. From the moment that they became publicly known they aroused grave discontent, amounting to revolt amongst the western population, and which was stifled under the name of brigandage. Moreover, they brought into existence, as a necessary consequence, that atrocious law on refractory conscripts, of which, in its time and place, I shall examine the spirit and development.

Thanks to these levies of two hundred and forty thousand men thus added to the armies of Italy and of Germany, Napoleon soon found himself in a position to confront the troops of Austria. He wished Prince Eugène to enter upon the campaign with a hundred thousand men, including Marmont's corps then occupying Dalmatia, and he ordered

[1] Napoleon to Lacuée, March 31, 1809.
[2] In the sitting of April 18.

him to concentrate his troops in Friuli; he sent the army of the Rhine, commanded by Davout, from Erfurt on Würzburg; he despatched Lefebvre to Munich to take command of the Bavarian contingent, numbering forty thousand men; he desired Bernadotte, who was at the head of the Saxon-Polish contingent, to replace the French garrisons of Glogau, Cüstrin, Stettin, and Dantzic by Poles, and to keep near Dresden in order to watch Bohemia. Finally, Masséna was directed to organise a corps of a new description at Strasburg, which, under the name of the *Army of Observation of the Rhine*, should hold itself in readiness to march to the Danube at the first signal.

The princes of the Confederation of the Rhine, whose united forces exceeded one hundred thousand men, received repeated orders to raise their effective strength to its full complement. Forced to take up arms against their country's cause, and perfectly aware of the hatred borne to our domination throughout Germany, these unhappy princes were not even allowed to flatter themselves that, whilst submitting to a lamentable necessity, they were at least obeying voluntarily, and acting independently. No effort was made to disguise the yoke to which they were subject, as their corps of auxiliaries were everywhere commanded by our generals;—the Saxons by Bernadotte; the Bavarians by Lefebvre; those of Würtemberg by Vandamme, who was forced upon the king of Würtemberg by Napoleon, despite his well-founded protests.

The army of Italy was to remain under the orders of Eugène, a brave young man full of ardour, but without military renown, and in whom the fact of his august relationship was supposed to supply the defect of experience and long service. As to the different divisions of the army of Germany, they were to be definitively subdivided, after some little consideration, into seven army-corps, exclusive of the guard and of Bessières' cavalry. According to Napoleon's own calculation these forces were to be allotted in the following manner: Lannes was to have fifty thousand men; Davout sixty thousand; Masséna fifty thousand; Lefebvre forty thousand; Augereau twenty thousand;

Bernadotte fifty thousand; King Jerome twelve thousand; which, with the twenty-two thousand guards and the twenty thousand of Bessières' corps, formed a total of three hundred and twenty-four thousand soldiers, and with those of the army of Italy four hundred and twenty-four thousand.[1]

The Austrian forces, though at first sight apparently of equal strength, were in reality very inferior to this enormous mass, being in great part composed of militia who could not with impunity be opposed to regular troops. The latter, of whom the acting army was to consist, did not, all included, amount to more than three hundred thousand men.

Archduke John was to attack Prince Eugène with fifty thousand men, supported by an insurrection in the Tyrol just about to break out; Archduke Ferdinand was to menace Saxon Poland with forty thousand men; and Archduke Charles, who commanded the chief army, occupied Western Bohemia with one hundred and eighty thousand men, ready to advance upon Bavaria. Two other detachments, of from ten to fifteen thousand men, were placed as corps of observation, one in Dalmatia, the other in the Tyrol. The militia, in fine, who exceeded a hundred and fifty thousand men, were held in reserve in the neighbourhood of Vienna and in Hungary as a last resource.

In spite of the inferiority of its forces the Cabinet of Vienna possessed a substantial advantage over us if it had known how to act in time; for its troops were concentrated whilst ours were lamentably dispersed. If we suppose Bonaparte in the place and position of the Archduke Charles, the result would not have been doubtful for one instant; in a few marches he would have been in the middle of our scattered army-corps, and would have defeated them one after the other. But the Archduke, though a clever general, was methodical and timid by nature, and cherished an admiration for the genius of his adversary, almost amounting to superstition, which partially

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, April 8.

paralysed his faculties; nor was the proverbial Austrian slowness capable of inspiring him with that life and spirit in which he failed.

Every one at Vienna, however, felt the necessity for prompt action if they wished to profit by an opportunity for which they had long been seeking. The partisans of the war, Stadion, Gentz, and Pozzo di Borgo redoubled their efforts to put an end to the hesitation of the court. Did they wish to wait until Napoleon should have finished his preparations in order to leave him time to crush Spain, and to allow German enthusiasm to cool down and become disheartened? Why did they speak of the menaces of Russia? That was nothing but an empty scarecrow. Every one knew that throughout his whole empire the French alliance was hated, and that Alexander alone counselled peace. If this one opportunity were not seized, the only alternative would be disarmament and submission, to which for more than one reason they would in any case soon be driven. In spite of the fresh subsidies recently received from England, Austria was ruined by this immense armament; victory alone could restore her exhausted finances, and if they must succumb in one manner or another it were better to fall with honour beneath the blows of Europe's enemy than beneath the weight of a disgraceful bankruptcy brought on by a more disgraceful failure.

Certain it is that, according to the reports of the Minister of Finance, Count O'Donnell, the resources of Austria no longer sufficed for the maintenance of her army, and that 'it was necessary to send it to live elsewhere, or to let it feed upon and exhaust Austria herself.' This necessity, though pressing less upon France, was nevertheless beginning to be keenly felt there ever since our armies had ceased to be maintained by Prussia. Napoleon, for the sake of popularity, had invariably kept his budgets at an uniform figure, independent of the course of events, as though they were a sort of arrangement made by Providence and placed above all terrestrial influences. Every year, or rather each time that he had to announce any enterprise

calculated to alarm the public, his ministers came to the Legislative Body and proclaimed with much solemnity that 'the taxes would not be increased!' The war contributions, the confiscations, the seizure of English merchandise, the alienation of crown lands in the conquered countries and of national property in France, had in fact enabled him, one way or another, to keep this promise, and to present well-balanced budgets, owing to the secret resources by which he covered the deficits. But this spring, which had seemed inexhaustible, was about to fail, unless renewed by a fresh stroke of that magic wand,—Napoleon's sword. Not only the expenses had considerably augmented, notwithstanding the pretensions to immutability claimed by the budget, but the receipts, which were supposed to follow an ascending scale, had diminished in far larger proportions. The Customs, affected by the continental blockade, had fallen more than twenty-five millions; the receipts from the alienation of national property had been reduced, in consequence of the state of general uneasiness, to a much smaller sum than had been calculated upon. Some twelve millions had been wasted in an insane effort to prevent a fall in the Funds and the lowering of the Five per Cents below eighty. Mollier calculates that this financial freak might have cost the State a *milliard* if Napoleon had not been obliged to give it up. These discoveries, together with other less important mistakes, showed a deficit of about fifty millions for the year 1808, and this notwithstanding that our troops, both in Prussia and in Spain, were almost always fed at the expense of the enemy.

This deficit, combined with some of the previous accounts yet unpaid, consisted of nearly a hundred millions, in spite of which, however, the ministry coolly kept their budget at the ideal figure of 730,000,000. Moreover, according to Mollier's calculation, the expenses of the Ministry of War for 1808 alone amounted to 380,000,000.[1] The military chest was always the infallible panacea for such evils; in fact, by it alone could the advances from the departmental chests be covered; for the sale of crown

[1] Mollier: *Mémoires d'un Ministre du Trésor.*

and national property, on which reliance was supposed to be placed, was but a precarious resource owing to want of purchasers. Its capital amounted to about 290,000,000, but nearly two-thirds of this sum, being the last portion of the contributions recoverable from Prussia, could not be exacted till 1809, 1810, and 1811. Napoleon therefore must, like Austria, have before long found it impossible to maintain the enormous army he had just organised. On the other hand, both powers had placed themselves in a position which rendered disarmament morally impossible. Hence, though war was not yet openly declared, it may be said to have virtually commenced. This situation of affairs, which admitted of no issue but by recourse to arms, deprives the last communications between the courts of Vienna and of Paris of all interest. Their diplomatic relations at that period were nothing but a kind of conventional form, which served to disguise the truth, and to lead by a measured pace to an end foreseen by every one. Metternich had announced to Champagny on the 2d of March that the measures adopted by Napoleon had forced the Cabinet of Vienna to place her army on a footing of war; and the French Minister had answered by bitter recriminations, which left little hope of a reconciliation, even had the grievances been less serious and the passions less excited.[1]

Henceforward the two governments thought only of completing their military arrangements. Masséna received the order to transfer his head-quarters from Strasburg to Ulm; Davout to advance from Würzburg to Ratisbon; Lannes to concentrate his army-corps at Augsburg. Napoleon, remembering the difficulties which the Danube had caused him during the campaign of 1805, despatched a corps of 1500 marines to that river for the purpose of facilitating his passage between its two banks. Major-General Berthier was sent to Strasburg to press forward the organisation and departure of troops that were behindhand. He was ordered to centralise the army at Ratisbon: 'But,' added Napoleon, 'Donauwörth and the line of the Lech is the position which must be occupied in case the enemy

[1] Documents communicated to the Senate, Nos. VIII. and XIV.

should anticipate me.'[1] In Italy, Murat was desired to march upon Rome, 'with the speed of lightning,' to replace there the troops commanded by Miollis, who had been sent to upper Italy, and to 'destroy this focus of insurrection.' The Emperor announced to him his intention of putting an end to the temporal power and of leaving the Pope merely his title of Bishop of Rome, believing, not unwisely, that this measure, which had been so long postponed, would pass by almost unperceived amidst the din of war.[2]

Austria might have attacked us with immense advantage from the 28th of March, but she wasted in false manœuvres the time which Napoleon so well knew how to use. The army of Archduke Charles, concentrated near Pilsen in Bohemia, could easily, in five days' march, have fallen upon our scattered corps at Ratisbon. Instead of attacking us in this bold fashion, and thereby creating disorder and terror amidst our cantonments, he left only one corps of 40,000 men in Bohemia under the orders of Bellegarde, and, taking the hundred and forty thousand others with him, made a long circuit in order to cross the Danube at Linz, and to present himself on the Inn conformably to the old routine of Austrian warfare. It is said that he adopted this plan against his own better judgment at the conclusion of a long discussion with Generals Grünn and Mayer, one of whom approved of the former, and the other of the latter plan; but if this be true his conduct is no less reprehensible; for such disagreement gives so much the greater weight to the opinion of a commander-in-chief, who alone ought to decide as he alone is responsible.

In such a state of things, those incidents which are only necessary to change menacing demonstrations into hostile declarations are never long wanting; they here occurred almost simultaneously on both sides. A French officer carrying despatches, though unofficially, from the Embassy at Vienna to the Legation at Munich, was arrested at Branua, and all his papers were seized and opened. A few days afterwards, in a march from Würzburg to Ratisbon,

[1] Instructions of March 30, 1809.
[2] Napoleon to Murat, April 5.

Davout's outposts violated the territory of the Austrian Empire.[1] Napoleon was no sooner informed of the arrest of the French officer than, by way of reprisal, he ordered that the couriers of the Austrian Cabinet should be seized on every route. Even this much was not needed to cause a rupture, now that all the preliminaries to it were terminated. Metternich demanded his passports, and on the morning of the 10th of April the Archduke Charles crossed the Inn with his army, whilst the Tyrol, taking fire with the rapidity of a train of powder, rose from one end to the other, to drive out the Bavarian garrisons.

Napoleon expected to be attacked, but not before the 15th of April, the period which he had fixed upon for joining his army on the Danube. But when, on the 10th of April, the Austrian ambassador demanded his passports, he saw clearly that the opening of the campaign was imminent, and he at once telegraphed to Berthier, who he supposed must be still at Strasburg, instantly to operate the concentration of the army, not at Ratisbon any longer, but at Augsburg and Donauwörth. In a letter of the same date, which has become the basis of all the accusations since then launched against this major-general, he explains his despatch to Berthier and recommends him anew 'to turn back towards the Lech, that is to say, from Augsburg to Donauwörth, should the Austrians make an attack before the 15th of April.' If the enemy made no move, but in that case only,[2] Davout was to remain at Ratisbon whilst Masséna was operating his movement from Ulm to Augsburg. But, on receiving the news of the passage of the Inn, Berthier had quitted Strasburg on the 11th to join the army, so that Napoleon's letter and despatch did not reach

[1] This fact is confirmed by a letter from Napoleon to Clarke, under date the 5th of April.

[2] The author of the *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire* here commits a mistake in supposing that the despatch was ambiguous, and that it ordered Berthier to leave Davout at Ratisbon *in any case*. The letter and the despatch are perfectly clear. It is there said, no doubt, that Davout is to remain at Ratisbon 'under all circumstances;' but the preceding phrase, '*If the enemy makes no move*,' leaves no room for doubt.

him until the 16th of April at Augsburg, just when the Emperor himself was on the point of arriving at head-quarters. Berthier, therefore, had no other guide but his instructions of the 30th of March, written in anticipation of the advance of the Austrians, not by the Inn, but from the side of Bohemia. These instructions, it is true, clearly foresaw the possibility of a concentration on the Lech, but 'in case the enemy should anticipate us;' which was rather a vague order, and susceptible of many different interpretations.

In a certain sense it might be said that the enemy did not anticipate us; for, after having crossed the Inn, he marched on but slowly and with difficulty towards the Isar, and had not as yet reached that river, behind which our army was in part concentrated. Davout, in fact, occupied Ratisbon with a corps which would consist of 60,000 men when joined by the Friant division still in the rear, and the Bavarians had assembled to the number of 40,000, part at Landshut and part at Neustadt. This position, however, was dangerous, because the line of the Isar could not be well defended, and because, if this line were once forced, Davout would find himself cut off from the bulk of the army then at Augsburg. Left to his own inspirations Berthier did little to ward off this danger; he even recalled Davout to Ratisbon, which he had already quitted in order to fall back on our centre, and he sent the Oudinot divisions to his assistance. But, although on this occasion he showed that indecision so common in men who are unaccustomed ever to act by themselves, Berthier in no way deserves all the reproaches which have been lavished upon him, as he received Napoleon's orders too late to carry them into effect.

It was full time that the Emperor should arrive on the theatre of war to repair the faults of his lieutenant. One marshal had even gone so far as to accuse Berthier of meditating defection.[1] Informed of the passage of the Inn by telegraph at 8 o'clock on the evening of the 12th of April, Napoleon quitted Paris on the morning of the

[1] General Pelet: *Mémoires sur la Guerre de* 1809.

13th, and on the morning of the 17th reached Donauwörth, the very point where he had wished to operate the concentration of his army. In the vicinity he had only the Würtembergers of Vandamme, who had arrived at Ingolstadt, and the Bavarian corps encamped between Geisenfield and Neustadt. Davout was still isolated at Ratisbon, and Masséna was at Augsburg with his army-corps and the Oudinot divisions that were to form portion of Lannes' corps. As to the Guard, it had scarcely passed beyond Würtemberg. Our army, therefore, extended along a distance of five-and-twenty leagues, with its back towards the Danube and its front towards the Isar, which the Austrians had crossed the day before. In the course of the day, on April 16, their advance-guard had appeared on the Isar before Landshut, and had commenced an engagement with the Bavarian division under Deroy, who defended the town; but the passage of the river having been forced upon two other points Deroy fell back on Neustadt. At the conclusion of this affair the whole Austrian army, with the exception of the corps left on the borders of Bohemia, had passed the Isar at Landshut, at Moosburg, and at Dingolfing, and was advancing towards us, threatening to cut our line in the middle.

Henceforth the two armies found themselves face to face, in nearly equal numbers,[1] in a kind of irregular quadrilateral, of which the two upper sides were formed by the Danube, and the two others by the Isar and the Lech; but the one which was concentrated possessed an incalculable advantage over the other which had not yet been able to accomplish this object. Archduke Charles, after having advanced by Landshut, might in two marches at the least have reached Obersaal on the Danube, have there stationed himself between the Bavarian corps and that of Davout, and have crushed them one after the other simply by the bulk of his army. But no sooner had he entered into a new country, intersected by swamps, woods, and hills, and found himself amidst corps of antagonists of whose

[1] According to General Stutterheim the forces which the archduke had under his hand amounted to 126,000 men; *Histoire de la Guerre de* 1809.

force and precise position he had no exact knowledge, than his timorous scruples took stronger possession of him than ever, and his slowness, his indecision, and his gropings, a second time saved our army from an almost inevitable check. He sent out his troops in three different directions by the three different roads which radiated from Landshut, but more as if to observe than to fight. The corps of Hiller and of the Archduke Louis were sent to Mainburg and to Siegenberg, opposite to the Bavarians; a detachment of minor importance went to reconnoitre the road to Ratisbon on the right, and the archduke himself advanced on Rohr by the central highway (April 18).

In the same degree that these movements were timid and unsteady, Napoleon's were precise, prompt, and decisive. From the moment of his arrival he had perceived the inadvisability of so extended a line and the necessity of concentrating his army. He lost no time, therefore, in sending Davout an order to return from Ratisbon to Neustadt, promising to go to meet him with the Bavarians, and thus assist his move. At the same time he summoned Masséna from Augsburg to Pfaffenhofen, when that marshal would be both nearer to the centre of the army and capable of menacing Landshut, that is to say, the archduke's line of retreat. By means of this double movement Napoleon drew back his left, which was too much in advance, and brought forward his right, which had been too much in the rear.

On the 19th of April, at early morn, Davout quitted Ratisbon, leaving only one regiment there to guard the bridge on the Danube against the army in Bohemia. His cavalry, artillery, and baggage took the road which borders the Danube. His infantry wended their way along the wooded heights that command the route from Abach to Tengen. This march performed along the Danube and in the very face of the Austrian army, was a most critical operation; moreover, it offered Archduke Charles the utmost chance of separating Davout from Napoleon. But, at the same moment that Davout was quitting Ratisbon, the archduke was quitting Rohr to march himself upon that town; instead, however, of taking the road by the

Danube, by which he could have barred Davout's passage, he had taken one to the right, and reached Ratisbon by Egloffsheim. One of his corps alone, that of Hohenzollern, encountered the Saint-Hilaire and Friant divisions between Saalhaupt and Tengen. After a sharp combat, known amongst us as the battle of Thann, and by the Germans as that of Tengen, these two divisions drove Hohenzollern back upon Hausen, and Davout effected his junction with the Bavarians (April 19).

Meanwhile, Masséna had been advancing on his side as far as Freising, so that our army had been concentrated, while that of the archduke had been dispersed. The Austrian corps, scattered between Abens and Ratisbon, no longer possessed any cohesion, and they left that initiative to Napoleon of which they had not known how to take advantage. They presented for his attack four principal groups. Hiller was at Mainburg, already apprehensive of Masséna's march on his rear, and Archduke Louis formed an extended line from Siegenberg to Kirschdorf, three or four leagues from Mainburg. Seven or eight leagues farther on, in the neighbourhood of Ratisbon, was Archduke Charles, whose most advanced corps was at Hausen, and had fought the day before. Napoleon at once determined to cut this unduly extended line in two, and then to destroy its separate and disjointed pieces. He left Davout before Hausen with instructions to keep back Archduke Charles, whilst he, the Emperor, proceeded to throw the bulk of his forces against Archduke Louis at Kirschdorf and at Siegenberg. Lannes was sent to Rohr with two divisions in order still further to prevent all communication between the enemy's two wings. These measures once taken, Napoleon sallied forth by Abensberg with the Bavarians and Würtembergers towards Offenstetten and Kirschdorf; he there overthrew the outposts of Archduke Louis, and drove them back upon Rohr, where they were met by Lannes, who completed their defeat. Archduke Louis, himself attacked at Siegenberg by General Wrede, and perceiving with dismay that his right was on the point of being turned, fell back in all haste towards Pfaffenhausen,

where he joined Hiller, who had come from Mainburg, but who had been unable to take any part in the combat (April 20).

In consequence of this short battle, in which not more than from twenty-five to thirty thousand Austrians had been engaged owing to the bad tactics of their commander-in-chief, the enemy's army found itself cut into two masses which could no longer unite. One portion was thrown back in disorder upon Landshut, where it ran great risk of being caught between Napoleon, who pursued it by Pfaffenhausen, and Masséna, who came along by Moosburg and the right bank of the Isar; the other was driven towards Ratisbon, and Napoleon, who believed that town to be still occupied by the troops Davout had left there, flattered himself that he had thus secured its complete destruction.

When, in the course of the day on April 21, at the conclusion of a third combat, more rapid even than those which had preceded it, Napoleon beheld himself master of Landshut in spite of Hiller's vain endeavours to defend it against the combined forces of Lannes and of Masséna, he considered the army of Archduke Charles as irretrievably lost. Doubtless it could no longer effect its escape, except by Ratisbon, believed to be still in our possession, by Landshut, then occupied by us, or by Straubing, where it was hoped that we might prevent its passage. But, however admirable his tactics had been during those three days, he overrated their importance, and above all overrated them when reporting them to others, as was his constant habit, in the hope that, by extravagantly exaggerating his successes, he might produce a strong impression upon the popular imagination. According to a note which he had printed and circulated in all directions, under date of April 21, 'The Austrian army had been struck by that fire from Heaven which punishes *the ungrateful*, *the unjust*, and *the perfidious;* it had been *pulverised.* All its army-corps had been crushed. More than twenty of its generals had been killed or wounded; *one archduke had been killed and two wounded.* They had upwards of 30,000 prisoners, etc. Of this army, which had dared to defy the French army, but a very small remnant had recrossed the Inn;' etc.

The whole note was in this style. Such unblushing inventions tarnished the renown of those victories, which certainly were less remarkable for their results, brilliant though these were, than for the skilful combinations which had led to them, and which were masterpieces of genius. The Austrian army was far from being pulverised, as had been asserted. Its separation into two distinct masses had, it is true, been achieved, but the Archduke Charles was still master of Ratisbon, where he kept that regiment prisoner which had been left there by us; he had summoned a division of the army of Bohemia to his aid, and, certain henceforth of being able to effect his retreat through that town, he commenced an attack, late though it was, against Davout's and Lefebvre's corps, in the neighbourhood of Eckmühl, where they had been ordered to hold him in check.

The Emperor, after having despatched Bessières' cavalry in pursuit of Hiller, and confided Landshut to a portion of Masséna's corps, set out with the remainder of his forces to support Davout. He reached Eckmühl at two o'clock in the afternoon. By a strategic freak that has never been explained, the archduke, instead of renewing his attack with his whole united corps, left none at Eckmühl but those of Rosenberg and of Hohenzollern. He sent the others to scour the country in the direction of Abach, where he ought to have concentrated merely sufficient troops to defend the high road along the Danube from Montbrun's light cavalry. The corps stationed at Eckmühl, in spite of their inferior numbers, resisted with great bravery the repeated assaults made by Lannes, Lefebvre, and Davout, but after many hours of fighting, Rosenberg, finding himself surrounded on all sides and seeing no hope of succour, retreated to Ratisbon, leaving the battlefield covered with dead. The archduke at once rushed forward with his cavalry to protect this retrograde movement, which soon became general throughout the entire army. The Austrian cavalry, charged by ours, were driven back upon their own infantry, but in due time the reserve under Prince Lichtenstein advanced, and, attacking our cuirassiers, continued a desperate struggle far on into the night (April 22).

Napoleon deemed it prudent not to push the pursuit too far, and the archduke was thus enabled to reach Ratisbon under cover of the darkness. On the morning of April 23 he recrossed the Danube by two bridges within sight of the Emperor, who endeavoured, without success, to impede the operation. He was able, however, to force his entrance into the town early enough to capture a small portion of the rear-guard left there by the archduke.

Napoleon's military genius had never appeared grander, more decided, or more fertile in resources than during this five-days' battle, of which the diverse episodes at Thann, Abensberg, Landshut, Eckmühl, and Ratisbon had only been the development of one single thought, and of which each stage, intended to rectify bad positions that were not of his creation, had also each been marked by a victory. Nothing had been left to chance, nor to those break-neck tactics which place the fortune of a country at stake only for the purpose of producing a startling effect. Napoleon had understood how to convert a retrograde evolution, which is always so difficult to execute in presence of an enemy, into an offensive movement that broke through the Austrian centre and threw their divided army back upon the opposite banks of the Danube. Never had the difficulties of so inextricable a position been disentangled, cleared away, and overcome with greater coolness, coherence, and firmness. The opening of this campaign is a model of scientific warfare; a masterpiece alike of boldness and of prudence, worthy in all its points of the first campaign in Italy, and almost above criticism, but for the falsehoods that disgraced it. Napoleon, in his bulletin, takes credit for having captured 60,000 prisoners, which, with a mimimum of 15,000 killed or wounded, diminished the Austrian army by 75,000 or 80,000 combatants. But, according to the most probable calculations, it had at the outside lost only one quarter of that number, all included.

The moral effect of this magnificent beginning was somewhat weakened by the bad news which arrived successively from Italy, the Tyrol, and Poland. In Italy, Prince Eugène, unexpectedly attacked by Archduke John before he had

been able to concentrate his army, had lost his advance-guard at Pordenone and had been then himself thoroughly defeated at Sacile. From thence he had been driven back to the Adige. Napoleon, on hearing of these disasters, perceived, though not without painful surprise, that his adoption of Eugène did not also include the transmission of his own intellect and spirit. He had been able, it is true, to make Prince Eugène his son and his lieutenant, but not to endow him besides with genius and experience, although on the whole he was a young man gifted with excellent qualities. He gave vent to his disappointment in terms full of bitterness: 'I see with pain,' he wrote to him, 'that you have neither the habit of war nor any idea how to make it. . . . I ought to have sent Masséna to you and have given you command of the cavalry under his orders. I committed a fault in giving you command of the army. I know that in Italy you pretend to despise Masséna; but, if I had sent him, what has happened would not have taken place. Masséna has military talents before which every one must bow.'[1]

Certain it is that it would have been infinitely juster and wiser to have given this great military man a command to which he had every claim than to have employed him at Eckmühl 'in carrying orders' on the field of battle like an orderly officer, as the Emperor, with a kind of petty vanity, stated in his first bulletin. But whose fault was this, if not the fault of Napoleon himself, whose infatuation is visible in the most insignificant details? In one letter, to Eugène, he says: 'I cannot conceive how my troops were beaten by that *Austrian canaille.* They numbered 300,000 here, and yet I always beat them though only *one against seven.*'[2] Austrian *canaille!* Spanish *canaille!* the more formidable Napoleon's enemies became, the more he affected to despise them, as if it depended upon him to make them contemptible in reality, and to diminish obstacles by despising them. Hence arose that tone of boasting and of presumption which he brought into fashion amongst his

[1] Napoleon to Eugène, April 30, 1809.
[2] *Ibid.*, April 26, 1809.

generals, and which, in the end, contributed not a little towards their reverses by inspiring them with a blind confidence in their superiority. Contempt of an enemy no doubt encourages audacity in war, but it also engenders negligence and fatal illusions, and it may safely be asserted that it has caused the loss of more battles than it has helped to gain. If Eugène had imitated the boastings by which it was sought to stimulate him, and if he had made his calculations on the same scale by which the Emperor asserted that he had fought as *one against seven*, he might have easily transformed his two defeats into brilliant victories. Quite incontestable is it that, though the position of our army had been most unfavourable at the beginning of this series of combats, its number, at least, had fully equalled that of the troops under Archduke Charles. It can be seen by every one of Napoleon's letters that Davout had 60,000 men, that the Bavarians united to the Würtembergers amounted to scarcely less than 50,000, that Masséna's corps, Bessières' cavalry, and Oudinot's divisions counted at least as many, and that their numbers hourly increased, whilst the archduke had not above 130,000 men dispersed over the various battlefields.

Napoleon, for a moment, thought of appointing Murat to the command of Eugène's army, but the arrival of Macdonald at the Viceroy's head-quarters soon made him change this plan. Moreover, it was clear that the retreat of Archduke Charles would force Archduke John to retrograde upon the Noric Alps. Eugène, with so eminent a general henceforward as counsellor, was equal to the task of pursuing and harassing his antagonist. In 1809, as in 1805, the impetus of the army operating on the Danube affected all the corps that were trying to act on its flanks, and the action of the principal corps governed also the subsidiary episodes. Archduke John was irresistibly involved in his brother's rout, and the Tyrolese insurrection itself, in spite of its brilliant success, was only a digression. The Tyrol not being situated on the direct line of our communications, nor the insurgents capable of being employed elsewhere like regular troops, that revolt, if not

suppressed, could at least be easily circumscribed, and allowed to exhaust itself on the spot until its ever-increasing isolation and the reaction of the great events of the war would permit it to be attacked with advantage. Meantime Lefebvre was sent to Salzburg to prevent the Tyrolese rushing down upon our flanks; no other precautions, however, were considered necessary. In Poland, Archduke Ferdinand had occupied Warsaw, and driven Poniatowski beyond the Vistula; but his very success enticed him on farther than he ought to have ventured, and his influence on the issue of the campaign was, in consequence, but very secondary.

After having recrossed the Danube at Ratisbon, Archduke Charles had taken the road to Bohemia, intending, apparently, to fall back on Linz or Krems, provided he could precede us at either place. But he was obliged to make a long and difficult circuit by Budweis, whilst we, marching straight along the road on the right bank of the Danube, had a thousand chances in our favour of occupying these positions before him. Hiller's corps was, in fact, incapable of arresting our passage over the different tributaries of the Danube, because, by attempting to cross them in various directions, we menaced more points than he could possibly defend. It is unnecessary to seek elsewhere for the motives which determined Napoleon not to follow the archduke into Bohemia. He would there have encountered a long and difficult route, positions to which the approach was rendered dangerous by the gorges of the Böhmer-Wald, and, moreover, have been constrained to divide his forces. By following the road along the Danube, he advanced more quickly by roads that were well known to him, preserved the advantage of concentration, had almost the certainty of reaching Vienna before his adversary, and of turning to account the great moral effect which the occupation of the enemy's capital always produces.

Napoleon immediately despatched his army at full speed on the road to Vienna. Addressing his soldiers after the taking of Ratisbon, and thanking them for their steady demeanour, he congratulated them 'for having gloriously

shown the difference which existed between the soldiers of Cæsar and the cohorts of Xerxes.' If ever a comparison could be disputed it was this one, for Austria stood alone against us, while Napoleon had gathered the troops of various nations to overwhelm her. On his side he had numbers and a great mass of men; and if any one recalled Xerxes by his pride and insane ambition most assuredly it was not the modest archduke. Unfortunately for the whole world, the new Xerxes was at the same time another Alexander. The Imperial order of the day terminated by the arrogant prediction that 'within a month we shall be in Vienna.' It did not however note the fact that between that town and us there were not more than about 30,000 men, scarcely capable of retarding our advance.

Hiller, after a successful retreat to the Inn, fighting on his way, recrossed that river in haste, and did not even attempt to dispute its passage with us. He resolved to stop us for some time on the Traun at Ebelsberg, the heights of which, crowned by an old castle, afforded him very strong positions. At a short distance farther on was the bridge of Mauthausen on the Danube, by which it was erroneously supposed that the archduke intended to come to Hiller's assistance. Masséna, consequently, whose army-corps, with Bessières' cavalry, formed the advance-guard, instantly issued an order to attack, although no one doubted the possibility of being able to take the Austrian positions by turning them at Lambach. General Cohorn carried the bridge and town of Ebelsberg successfully, under a fearful fire. Every house was several times taken and retaken amidst the flames which consumed the town, and he was on the point of succumbing, when the Legrand division rushed forward to his assistance over the calcined bodies of the slain. We then took the castle and definitely remained masters of the place, after one of the most sanguinary and desperate struggles mentioned in the history of that time, while the Austrians, finding their position turned by the Lambach road where Lannes' corps had passed, retreated, after first destroying the bridge at Mauthausen (May 3).

The army continued its onward march to Vienna, leav-

ing strong detachments behind it at the principal points of Ratisbon, Passau, and Linz, intended to protect our communications and to defend the Danube against the possible return of the archduke. The charge of guarding the course of the river was confided to Davout. After having followed the archduke to the foot of the Böhmer-Wald, the marshal had returned to Straubing and there closed the route of the army, but Bernadotte's expected arrival at Ratisbon would soon, it was thought, allow Napoleon to summon Davout and his corps to join him at Vienna.

Archduke Charles had hoped to reach Krems before us, and there to assist Hiller in covering Vienna. But this illusion was speedily dispelled. In fact, it had been rendered more than ever impracticable by the time he had lost in complete inactivity at Budweis, in Bohemia. He therefore ordered his lieutenant to cross over again to the left bank of the Danube, which order Hiller, hard pressed by our advance-guard, quickly obeyed, at the same time destroying the bridge at Krems, and leaving a detachment behind him with orders to repair to Vienna, there to reinforce the town militia which was preparing to defend the capital.

On the 10th of May 1809 the French army appeared before Vienna. The old town was still encircled by the fortifications which had once withstood every attack of the Turks, but it hardly contained one-third of the population of the capital, and its vast suburbs had no means of defence. The Archduke Maximilian, entrusted with the command of the place, had about fifteen thousand regular troops under his orders exclusive of the militia. He sacrificed the suburbs, intrenched himself behind the old ramparts, and proudly rejected the proposals of surrender which were made to him. But Napoleon having, after a short bombardment, thrown some light infantry into the island whereon the Prater is situated, the archduke, seeing his communications thus endangered, evacuated the town in all haste to avoid being taken prisoner with his detachments; and our troops for the second time made their victorious entry into Vienna.

True to his old tactics of exciting the people against their sovereigns, Napoleon, with high-sounding affectation, confided the inhabitants to the humanity of his soldiers. He declared that he 'took under his special protection *that good population of Vienna, forsaken, abandoned, widowed;* that capital which the princes of the House of Lorraine had deserted, not like soldiers of honour who yield to the circumstances and reverses of war, *but like perjurers pursued by remorse.* In flying from Vienna,' he said, 'their *farewell had been that of murder and fire; like Medea, they had slaughtered their children with their own hands.*'[1]

This paltry piece of tragic declamation, regarding an honourable and patriotic attempt to defend the town, could no longer deceive any one; but the more groundless were the accusations, the more exaggerated was the tone adopted in the hope of making them be believed. Napoleon supposed it possible, by dint of violence, to force a conviction on others which he did not himself share. Such epithets as ungrateful, coward, and perjurer, recurred in every line of the bulletins and proclamations respecting the emperor of Austria. By hearing them repeated daily, the ignorant mass of the soldiery ultimately persuaded themselves that Napoleon must, in some circumstances unknown to them, have heaped benefits upon this prince before he thus struck him; but, to have hoped to obtain credence for so improbable a story amongst nations who shared the bad fortune and insults inflicted on the Emperor Francis, required extraordinary faith in the power of charlatanism. It was carrying such faith to the extreme of folly to offer 'Independence and[2] liberty,' open handed, to the Hungarians, when the hand which proffered the gift was still red with the blood of the Spaniards; it was pushing it beyond all bounds, moreover, to use the following language in reference to the noble and generous-hearted Schill, when it became known that he had made his regiment mutiny at Berlin in order to draw it off towards Westphalia: he was spoken of as '*a man of the name of Schill, a kind of brigand, who had*

[1] Proclamation of May 13, 1809.
[2] Proclamation to the Hungarians, May 15, 1809.

blackened himself with crimes in the last Prussian campaign.' [1]

No Asiatic monarch, no human idol dispensing his oracles to prostrate multitudes, ever defined the great problems of good and evil with more placid infallibility. Good was nothing but an emanation from his own person; it consisted of everything which served his designs; evil was all that thwarted them. The actions of individuals, as of nations, were no longer judged by any standard but that of Napoleon's interests. Such was the simple and novel moral openly avowed in the Imperial manifestoes and taught to Europe at the cannon's mouth. Napoleon clearly began to believe that it required but little further effort on his part to inculcate this doctrine. The taking of Vienna had produced the moral effect he had anticipated. The news from the other armies again became excellent. Prince Eugène, with double the number of troops, pursued Archduke John, who was forced to retreat to Hungary to avoid being caught between two fires; Lefebvre beat the insurgents in the Tyrol and occupied Innspruck; Poniatowski retook Warsaw from Archduke Ferdinand, who was obliged to retire within the Austrian frontier in order to draw nearer to his brother. One more blow remained to be struck, and the dissolution of this piecemeal monarchy would assuredly follow. Flushed by hope, Napoleon thought it useless any further to delay the execution of those measures which he had been meditating against the court of Rome. Such an act, which was more startling on account of the recollections it evoked than the changes which it would effect, seemed to him appropriately to fill up the interlude of his stay at Vienna; for it was quite in keeping with his character of Fatalist to afford the spectacle to an Empire which was itself on the point of falling, of another domination suddenly struck dead.

In consequence, he issued on the 17th of May 1809 the famous decree which put an end to the temporal power of the Popes. He was pleased to date it from 'his Imperial Camp at Vienna,' as if to prove that the seat of his

[1] Sixth Bulletin.

sovereignty lay wherever it suited him to establish it. He grounded the measure,—very justly, however,—not upon his personal grievances, but upon the abuses which had at all times resulted from the confusion of the spiritual and the temporal power. But his silly infatuation betrayed itself in the preamble, in which he introduced 'Charlemagne, his august predecessor, Emperor of the French,' and invoked against the Sovereign Pontiffs the terms of the Carlovingian donation. This exhumation from the Gothic ages, which he thought would heighten the effect, only diminished it, by showing in what antiquated regions his imagination loved to roam. No one, moreover, could believe him sincere in his historical condemnation of the 'Bishops of Rome,' for their history was well known to him when he had restored their power. The recollection of their iniquities had in no wise embarrassed him when he had hoped to profit by their services. He overthrew them simply because Pius VII. had not proved complaisant; and if the power he deprived them of was to increase his own, this legitimate revolution, of which he constituted himself the instrument, would become a scourge rather than a benefit.

The enacting portion of the decree contained one characteristic detail. It stated that the Pope's revenue should be increased by an annual income of two millions (Art. 5). This bait, which could be withdrawn at will, was destined according to Napoleon's idea to keep the Papacy in the right path of duty, through fear of losing so rich an endowment. Such, most certainly, was the opinion which the new Charlemagne entertained of the institution he had restored and the Pontiff by whom he had wished to be crowned. In that, however, he grossly deceived himself; yet to a certain degree it is noteworthy as the estimate of one who was so keenly alive to the weaknesses of mankind. Most incontestable is it that he thought the Prelates of the Roman Court, and the Pope himself, capable of accepting a similar bargain. 'You have seen by my Decrees,' he wrote to Murat a little later, 'that I *have behaved well to the Pope;* but it is on the condition of his remaining quiet.' From these words it is evident that his frequent intercourse

with the court of Rome had not inspired him with much esteem for those who directed it.

While these new incidents were occupying public attention, Napoleon was making every preparation for destroying the army of Archduke Charles, from which the Danube alone now separated him. The crossing of rivers in presence of the enemy has always been considered as one of the most difficult operations in war; that of the Danube, an exceptionally wide stream, would have been impracticable under the fire of so strong an army, had not the topographical circumstances peculiar to the environs of Vienna considerably lessened the danger. Narrow, deep, and rapid up to the vicinity of the capital, no sooner does the Danube approach its walls than it widens and slackens its speed, embracing in its course many islands which divide its waters, so that instead of the one single obstacle of its powerful current, it presents a series of rather narrow channels, comparatively easy to cross. Two of these islands especially seemed favourable for a passage: that of Schwarze-Lake, situated in front of Vienna and opposite Nussdorf, and that of Lobau, about a league and a half farther back.

Napoleon caused preparations to be made for crossing the river at both points. But the two battalions which he had sent on to take possession of Schwarze-Lake having been captured by the Austrians, he confined himself, on that side, to simple demonstrations, and concentrated all his resources for action at Lobau. The island being a league wide and three leagues in circumference, he was enabled to quarter an army there under shelter from the enemy's guns. The archduke had neglected to occupy it: it was consequently easy to take, and as easy to throw a bridge across the arm of the river which separated it from us and was by far the longest. The channel, on the other side, separating the island from the left bank, then held by the enemy, was only 110 yards wide, and could thus be easily and rapidly crossed by a flying bridge, without any more difficulty than is experienced in the passage of an ordinary river. The obstacle was further diminished by

the island forming a semicircular bend round the point from which we were to throw the bridge over, our artillery being thus enabled to render it inaccessible to the enemy. By means of the long bridge placed out of reach of all attack, of this island which could serve as a halting-place and parade-ground for his troops, and of the small bridge which could be thrown across in two or three hours, Napoleon felt certain of being able to land his army on the left bank before the archduke, who was ignorant of the exact state of affairs, would find it possible to oppose him.

He had, it is true, just been informed that an Austrian *corps d'armée* had tried to cross the river at Linz and to fall upon our rear—a fact which, while it indicated that Archduke Charles had attempted a retrograde movement in the hope of turning our flanks, proved at the same time that he had divided his forces. The Emperor instantly resolved to hasten his passage across the Danube, notwithstanding the alarming rise in its waters, which were swollen by the melting of snow in the Alps, and shook his principal bridge to an alarming degree; for though it had been laid upon very substantial boats, their fastenings were far from being strong or firm. During the afternoon of May 20 the flying bridge was constructed in three hours, and Masséna took up his position on the left bank. On the other side of a small wood, near which our troops landed, stood two pretty villages on the right and left, Aspern and Essling, destined before long to become a heap of ruins. The Boudet, Molitor, and Legrand divisions, with a portion of the Guards, there intrenched themselves without delay. These villages, joined by a canal, having in their entire length only one cross street, and possessing several buildings of substantial masonry, formed a sort of fortified front most favourable to a defensive attitude. The archduke continued invisible the whole of that day, merely showing us a large advance-guard of cavalry which watched our movements while scouring the vast plain of the Marchfeld. On the following day, May the 21st, he decided on attacking Napoleon, before the whole of our army should have crossed over to the left bank. The inexplicable dilatoriness

of his movements wellnigh cost him dear. Happily for him, our large bridge had been broken during the night, and the repairs required time, so that Napoleon, consequently, was unable to concentrate more than a portion of his forces.

The archduke did not advance against us until very late in the day. He marched forward with about seventy thousand men and three hundred guns, forming a concentric line around the villages of Aspern, Essling, and Enzersdorf, in which our troops were intrenched.[1] Our forces on that first day cannot be estimated at less than forty thousand men.[2] This great numerical inferiority forcibly reduced us to act on the defensive, but the two positions of Aspern and Essling having been rapidly transformed into true citadels it was not easy to dislodge from them soldiers of the description they contained, commanded too by generals such as Lannes and Masséna. Masséna had shut himself up in Aspern, and there received the first shock of the Austrian army. Assailed almost simultaneously by the two corps of Hiller and of Bellegarde, he sustained the attack with vigour, and his well-directed fire caused immense loss to the serried masses of the enemy, enclosed in a space where it was impossible to deploy.

[1] Two of his army-corps were absent, one near Linz under Kollowrath, the other before Vienna under Archduke Louis. His reserve, moreover, had remained at Breitenlee.

[2] I am here in contradiction with all the French accounts, which place this number at five-and-twenty or thirty thousand. On our side there were, of infantry, the four divisions of Boudet, Molitor, Legrand, and Carra Saint-Cyr. It must be explained by what impenetrable mystery these divisions, which were composed, some of three, others of two brigades—that is to say, some formed of six regiments, others of four—could have been reduced to an average of five thousand men, when, at the outset of the campaign a regiment consisted of three thousand men *present under arms*. These four divisions comprised *sixteen regiments* in all—that is to say, from thirty to thirty-two thousand men at a minimum, admitting a reduction of a thousand men per regiment. A similar calculation must be applied to the cavalry, which counted four divisions of from eight to ten thousand horse. The divisions of Lasalle and Marulaz alone included *ten cavalry regiments*, which, originally composed of a thousand men *present under arms*, must at least have still had seven or eight hundred.

Soon, however, the Austrian columns were led on with spirit, and, making the Molitor division give way, they sprang forward and carried the village. But Masséna, intrenched within the enclosure of the cemetery, resisted with an obstinacy which nothing could shake. He despatched the Marulaz cavalry on their flanks, and the village was retaken by the Legrand division.

Lannes held Essling with the Boudet division, and with equal firmness repulsed the assaults of Rosenberg's corps. He first evacuated the village of Enzersdorf, as from the small number of his troops he did not care to defend it, but each time the Austrians advanced upon Essling they were received by a shower of musketry and grape-shot that made them retire in disorder. In consequence of the failure of this double attack on our two wings, the archduke sent Hohenzollern's corps, supported by Lichtenstein's cavalry, against our centre. While his artillery was pouring its fire upon the two villages, Hohenzollern advanced through the interval which separated them, and Bessières, at the head of all our cavalry, met these fresh columns; but in vain endeavoured to break their ranks. He stopped them, however, and then rushing past them commenced an attack upon the Austrian batteries. Lichtenstein's squadrons, meanwhile, dashed forward at full gallop and instantly engaged ours in close combat. The general of the Spanish Cuirassiers was killed, but the cavalry charges continued on both sides without any definite result. Still we were losing ground, and, little by little, were driven back into the promontory which is formed by a bend of the Danube below Essling. Meanwhile, Bellegarde and Hiller recommenced their attack against Masséna with fresh energy, and this time our troops were overthrown and the cemetery itself fell into the power of the enemy. But Masséna quickly returned at the head of the Saint-Cyr and Legrand divisions, and, at the conclusion of a desperate struggle, succeeded in retaking half the village.

Night was approaching, and the archduke suspended the combat, though, by one further effort, he would probably have driven the French army into the Danube. But

this prince, though an excellent general in other respects, had none of that determined obstinacy which wrests favours from fortune whenever she shows hesitation in granting them. His manner of making war had all the carelessness of the *Grand Seigneur*. He prided himself on excessive courtesy, and adopted proceedings that would have been more appropriate to a tournament. He seemed to consider it bad taste and want of generosity to push his advantages beyond a certain limit, a capital fault when confronting an enemy who was so anxious to make the very utmost of all his gains. His cold, slow, methodical temper was a stranger to that implacable anger which never pardons an enemy, is never actuated by respect for others, nor admits of a compromise, and always ends by overcoming opposition; for victory bestows herself on the strongest will far oftener than upon those who have the greatest skill. Even at the beginning of the campaign, when there had been a question as to the exchange of prisoners, he had overwhelmed his conqueror with exaggerated compliments, which were only met by contemptuous silence. This first day he missed the opportunity of making Napoleon expiate one of the greatest acts of imprudence he had committed during all his military career. In fact, if our army was obliged to fight with insufficient numbers, that fault could only be attributed to the temerity of a plan that was unworthy of the Emperor's genius. The extraordinary rise of the Danube sufficiently indicated the probable breaking up of the long bridges. With greater foresight and more solicitude for the lives of his soldiers, Napoleon should then have done what he did later, namely, not have allowed them to cross over to the left bank until he had collected in the isle of Lobau, beyond reach of any accident to the long bridge, a number of troops sufficient to insure victory.

Unfortunately it was rather too late to recognise this truth, of which the following day afforded striking confirmation. Large bodies of troops crossed over during the night, including the four divisions of Lannes' corps, two brigades of cavalry, and the guard which numbered twenty-two thousand at the commencement of the campaign, and which

had not been in any battle up to that moment. They amounted to at least as many as had been engaged the day before, which, allowing for losses, does not permit the total to be lower than from 75,000 to 80,000 men; but the long bridge again broke in two during the night, and a part of our artillery remained behind, on the right bank, with Davout's corps. The communication was restored, it is true, at early morn, and the passage recommenced, but not without having caused a disastrous delay.

Towards three o'clock on the morning of the 22d of May the two armies, after bivouacing opposite to each other, again took up arms. The firing began at dawn in Aspern, occupied half by French and half by Austrians. Supported by fresh troops, Masséna, at the point of the bayonet, attacked Hiller's and Bellegarde's regiments which had taken up a position in the village, and, successively capturing the cemetery and the church, drove them back upon their line of battle. Essling, entrusted to the Boudet division, as yet only suffered from a severe cannonade. The enemy's line, from Aspern to Enzersdorf, still formed, as on the previous day, a vast semicircle around us, from which all its fire converged upon our centre. Napoleon, however, was not now in that state of inactivity which had occasioned so much loss the evening before. The enemy's line was too extended to be very firm. He therefore resolved to push through the centre of it, and selected Lannes to inflict that blow upon the archduke which was intended to cut his army in two.

No one was more capable of comprehending and executing this great manœuvre than this intrepid commander. Lannes sallied forth from between the two villages with an irresistible mass of men, composed of the two divisions of Oudinot and of Saint-Hilaire, and several divisions of cavalry under the orders of Bessières. His columns being too deep suffered severely at first, but they deployed as they advanced and marched straight upon Breitenlee, where the archduke's head-quarters were established. The Hohenzollern corps, which tried to bar our passage, was partially overthrown, and fell back on Breitenlee, receiving

our cavalry charges bravely. The artillery line, which made such sad havoc in our ranks, was broken, and Lannes continued to advance upon the Austrian centre, until the archduke, rushing forward with a flag in his hand, rallied his soldiers and brought up his reserve of grenadiers. Some of our squadrons were actually commencing a charge upon Breitenlee when Lannes, to his great surprise, suddenly perceived that he was unsupported. The archduke's centre was falling back before us, but if we went farther his wings would close upon our flanks in the space which we should have been obliged to leave uncovered. Moreover, the marshal soon received an order to retire to Essling, for Napoleon had learned that the principal bridge was again broken. He was thus forced to abandon all hope of support from Davout, and the necessity of maintaining his communications with the island of Lobau chained him to the positions at Aspern and Essling. The two wings of our army having thus to remain inactive, Lannes' movement had only been an eccentric manœuvre without any result.

Certain it is, however, that if this movement by Lannes had thrown the enemy into 'a most fearful rout,' as Napoleon asserted in his bulletin, and later in his notes on the battle of Essling, the Emperor would not have hesitated to complete such a rout by the movement of his whole army, even at the risk of exposing his communications; for a similar apprehension had never stopped him when he believed himself to be on the point of success. Lannes' manœuvre had been brilliantly executed, but it could not have been crowned with success except at the cost of a long and sanguinary struggle, for which the presence of Davout's corps was essential. The news which obliged us to retreat soon spread through both armies, causing consternation amongst our soldiers and reviving the ardour of our adversaries. Lannes fell slowly back on Essling, closely pressed by the same troops whom he had a short time before been chasing before him. In this retrograde movement, Saint-Hilaire, one of the bravest and most highly esteemed amongst our generals, was mortally

wounded. The enemy made several vain attempts to attack the three divisions which Lannes was leading back to Napoleon, but re-forming their line of artillery their fire soon caused fearful havoc in our ranks.

It being henceforth impossible to continue the battle according to any combined plan of action on our side, the conditions of the previous day had to be resumed, namely, an obstinate defence behind the crumbling houses of the villages of Aspern and Essling. Sharply attacked by the Austrian columns, who felt the necessity of a sovereign effort in order to insure victory, these two spots were taken, retaken, and disputed inch by inch amidst fearful scenes of confusion, despair, and carnage. The houses and the streets were encumbered with dead: the wounded everywhere falling upon those who had died there the day before. Essling was five times carried by the Austrians, and five times were they driven from it. The direct attacks against our centre, where Lannes resumed his position of the morning, were not more decisive. Hohenzollern's corps and Lichtenstein's cavalry here met the same divisions they had encountered on the plain of the Marchfeld: they could not, however, force that point on which our safety depended, though unconsciously inflicting upon us a loss which was worse than a defeat; for Marshal Lannes fell, having both knees fractured by a cannon ball. At that same moment Rosenberg succeeded by a dashing attack in making himself master of Essling, capturing the scattered remnants of the Boudet division and there intrenching himself with the archduke's reserves. Our soldiers were by this time driven towards the narrow peninsula where they soon found themselves close to the river. But happily General Mouton —known to our generation by the name of Count Lobau— quickly advanced at the head of the fusiliers of the guard. Nothing could resist his cool intrepidity; he charged the Austrians at the point of the bayonet, and drove them back in turn to the further extremity of the village.

This last incident disheartened the enemy, who thenceforth contented himself with cannonading us from a distance. Not having succeeded in ousting us from these

positions on the previous day, when his forces were numerically superior to ours, he gave up all hope of accomplishing that object now that our numbers nearly equalled his own. His artillery however—but feebly answered by our guns from dread of failure in ammunition—created fearful havoc in our ranks, and prolonged the fatal losses of the battle long after the cessation of the combat.

The last two days of Aspern and Essling formed one of the most sanguinary affairs of the century, though without achieving any very marked result for either side. This very absence of any result, however, was for Napoleon a serious check, and in this respect the battle of Essling can only be compared to that of Eylau. He was forced to make a retrograde movement, to abandon the left bank of the Danube for the possession of which he had shed so much blood, and by this alone everything was left doubtful. He found it impossible for some time to come to talk, without risk of ridicule, of the *Austrian canaille.* Archduke Charles, on the second day, had proved himself to be as valiant a soldier as he was a distinguished general; but it was no longer in his power to repair the fault he had committed on the first by his slowness and the feebleness of his attacks against an army which was not then in a state to resist him.

As night descended Napoleon made his troops cross back into the Isle of Lobau. This island afforded them a kind of intrenched camp of almost impregnable strength; its shores were covered with batteries that swept the left bank of the Danube. Davout's divisions lined the right bank. They were soon to join hands with Prince Eugène who was marching up with the army of Italy. Bernadotte's and Lefebvre's corps guarded the course of the river from the neighbourhood of Vienna on to Bavaria. The provisioning of Lobau was certain from its proximity to the Austrian capital; therefore, if necessary, they could stay there for many months. This post was confided to Masséna, whose indomitable strength of mind had never excited the admiration of the army more than during the perils of these two days.

As Napoleon was crossing to the island of Lobau, he espied the litter upon which lay his old companion in arms, Lannes, whose leg had just been amputated. Rushing towards him, he embraced him vehemently. Next day he went to see him in a house at Ebersdorf whither the marshal had been carried. It is said that the dying man, on recovering from a long swoon, the precursor of his last sleep, cast looks upon the Emperor that were no longer those either of servant or friend, but of a judge. In presence of that great mystery which dissipates all human illusions, and having no further desire to disguise the truth, Lannes repelled the words of consolation the hollowness of which he well knew. He burst forth into bitter complaints against the ambition and insensibility of the reckless gambler, in whose eyes men were but so much ready coin, to be risked without scruple and lost without remorse. Lannes had been a republican; he had continued an ardent patriot; and more than once had displeased his master by the boldness of his censures and by the disapprobation of his mien in the midst of a servile court. The words attributed to him in his last moments are, therefore, very much in keeping with his character, and Napoleon's passionate denial of them only serves to make them more probable. But, as there were no avowed witnesses present at the interview, this point must always remain matter of conjecture.[1]

A horrible massacre of not less than fifty thousand men killed in one single encounter, with no other result than to furnish flourishes in bulletins; fortune again made uncertain; nations disquieted, agitated by the breath of liberty and awaiting a signal in order to rush to arms; Napoleon arrested in his course and held in check by an adversary who was astonished at not having been beaten;—such were

[1] This conversation was reported in accordance with the accounts of friends who attended Lannes, by Cadet de Gassicourt, entrusted with the embalming of the marshal's body (*Voyage en Autriche en* 1809 *à la suite des armées françaises*). The denial given to it by General Petit in his *Mémoires sur la guerre de* 1809 has no weight, as it does not refer to the scene of which Cadet de Gassicourt speaks, but to Napoleon's first interview with the wounded marshal.

the unexpected, stirring incidents which Europe now watched with the most anxious attention, its eyes fixed on that obscure island where its destinies were soon to be, for a second time, at stake. Whilst the different nations were questioning themselves as to the issue of the great duel, another actor had already appeared on the scene. Far away, at the other extremity of the horizon, on the confines of that land of marvels called Spain, a tumultuous mass might be discerned, drawing nearer and growing larger from hour to hour. It is Wellington's army, advancing from Portugal, and driving before it the legions commanded by Soult.

CHAPTER III

STATE OF EUROPE AND OF GERMANY DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1809—POPE PIUS VII. CARRIED AWAY FROM ROME—BATTLE OF WAGRAM—ARMISTICE OF ZNAIM

(*June–July* 1809)

THE signal failure at Essling presented a rare opportunity to Napoleon's enemies for striking a dangerous, if not a fatal, blow at his power. Without having been exactly conquered, he had been forced to retrograde, to modify his plans, and, for a time at least, to abandon that offensive line of action which was so consonant to his genius, so dear to his pride. Though he had not been subjected to the humiliation of a defeat, his schemes had nevertheless been foiled, his prestige injured, and his position endangered. He had partly lost that wonderful strength derived from public opinion, which he had hitherto wielded like a talisman, and, for the moment, he was rendered incapable of undertaking anything. The two days at Essling had shown the fragile nature of all his much-vaunted glory and power, of his grand projects and great good fortune. The crossing of a river had wellnigh swept them away; in fact, one effort more would suffice to drive the hero of so many exploits into the waters of the Danube. Isolated, surrounded by enemies, amidst a population that was ready to revolt, and at an immense distance from his natural basis of support, it now seemed as though the mere possibility of his downfall, so long and ardently desired, would in itself cause a universal uprising against him.

From a military point of view it henceforth became clear

that the passage of the Danube, in presence of a numerous and warlike army, was not one of those operations which could be achieved by pure audacity. It was an undertaking brimful of peril, requiring all the energy and mental resources of a great captain for its successful execution, and so difficult as almost to restore the balance between the two combatants. So long too as this operation was incomplete, the results of our previous victories continued doubtful. Every one instinctively felt,—in accordance with the well-known adage,—that in war nothing is done while anything remains to be done. Napoleon, it was said, had at length met with that obstacle which, sooner or later, the all-powerful of this world always do encounter: he had come across that grain of sand which makes even the most invincible stumble —nay, more, the Empire itself was at stake.

The mere fact of such doubts arising in the public mind produced symptoms of dissolution everywhere, and proved how artificial and unstable was the work of this modern Cæsar. Attempts at insurrection became numerous in Germany. Our allies of the Confederation of the Rhine, who fought unwillingly in our ranks, were ready to turn against us those arms which we had forced them to use against their country. Our other allies, the Russians, partially reconciled with Austria on account of the insurrection we had disloyally provoked in Gallicia, seemed more inclined to occupy themselves with the Poles than to support us. Prussia, undecided, but permanently hostile, was only watching for some more decided reverse to declare herself openly. England had finished her preparations for a great expedition, the precise object of which was still a mystery, although its destination was not doubtful. Affairs in Spain were taking a vexatious turn, and boded fresh disasters to our armies. The Pope was preparing to excommunicate the spoliators of the Holy See. The Tyrolese insurrection, subdued for the time, was smouldering like a half-extinguished fire. Lastly, France herself was discontented and alarmed. Napoleon's danger was exaggerated there. The French supposed that he was surrounded in the Isle of Lobau, whereas he had never ceased to

command the right bank of the Danube, and the very original manœuvre, which had again given him—as it did in the marshes of Arcolea—an almost impregnable camp, seemed at a distance only an expedient rendered necessary by his distress.

It were impossible to deny that there was sufficient in all these elements of material and moral force successfully to counterbalance the enormous advantages Napoleon possessed in the superiority of his army and in his own military talents. But would his adversaries know how to combine and set in motion these scattered resources?—to seize the opportunity, to understand the value of time, to profit by the lessons of the past, to gather their forces into one phalanx—in a word, to borrow from their terrible enemy, were it but for an instant, the tactics which had succeeded so marvellously in his hands? Such were the questions which agitated the public mind and which the spectators of this great duel asked each other in every quarter of the world.

The auxiliaries upon whose assistance Austria had a right to count, being dispersed over vast distances, could alone remedy their want of cohesion by the utmost activity, promptitude, and union. In all these respects their efforts had hitherto been fruitless; but this was only an additional motive for now urging them to make use of the time afforded by the forced halt of the French army in the Isle of Lobau. Germany was ripe for insurrection, owing to the unceasing labours of the *Tugendbund* and secret societies. Even the women everywhere constituted themselves agents of this conspiracy, universally wearing its badges, moreover, and adopting ornaments in steel as symbols of the regeneration they expected by means of iron.[1] It is true that neither the localities nor the manners, habits, or characters of the Germans were adapted to the same kind of insurrectionary movements which we had found it so difficult to suppress in Spain. Proofs of this had occurred since the opening of the campaign, when the successive attempts made by Dornberg in Westphalia, by Katt at Magdeburg,

[1] See the curious Memoirs of Beugnot, who was at that period administrator of the Grand-Duchy of Berg.

by the chivalrous Schill at Berlin, failed through want of harmony in the arrangements, or rather from the utter deficiency of ground favourable to partisan warfare. None the less were they a significant sign of the new-born feelings that were agitating a population ordinarily so peaceful. The instrument for liberation existed—the mode for setting it in motion was alone needed; and if, instead of these desultory, ill-timed insurrections, one single combined movement could be organised, if discipline could be enforced, or any one government would venture to assume the leadership, it might be possible to give these outbreaks an impulse which would carry all before them. Who can say what effect might not have been produced in Germany by the landing of English troops, who, starting from the mouth of the Elbe and following the course of that river, would have fallen upon our communications, whilst their bold native partisans, seeing their own efforts thus ably seconded, would have made the people rise throughout the length and breadth of the land?

Schill appears to have expected and appealed for a diversion of this nature, when, after having for an instant menaced the frontiers of Westphalia and of the Grand-Duchy of Berg, he turned off abruptly to the Hanseatic towns. But the hoped-for succour did not come. Schill had been too precipitate, and with his life he paid the forfeit of his generous error. Disowned by his country, branded as a deserter by the Prussian Government, described as a brigand in Napoleon's bulletins, outlawed by King Jerome, who thus revenged himself for the fear he had experienced when forced to set a price on his enemy's head,[1] pursued by the Danish troops and the columns of General Gratien, Schill fell like a hero beneath the walls of Stralsund. He was loaded with official opprobrium, it is true, but it was of that kind which time changes into the purest glory, and nothing could deprive him of the everlasting honour of being the first, if not the grandest, of those proud martyrs whose blood was the ransom of their German Fatherland (May 31, 1809). Schill's companions

[1] By a Decree, dated Cassel, May 5, 1809.

were sent to the galleys at Toulon by order of Napoleon. The *Moniteur* had the audacity to announce later that 'the men belonging to Schill's band who have not been killed have been taken to the galleys in Toulon, to the number of three hundred and sixty. . . . All who consider that they, although they follow that trade, differ from ordinary robbers, because they have worn a uniform, merely deserve contempt.' But neither ignominious treatment of this sort, nor the recollection of their leader's tragic end, in any degree stopped the springs of such noble self-sacrifice. The standard which dropped from Schill's dying hands was at once raised by the duke of Brunswick-Oels, son of the brave warrior who was defeated at Jena. In despite, therefore, of these first reverses, which had only proved the inefficiency of partial efforts, nothing was in reality lost, and the chances of a great German insurrection continued almost entirely open to whoever might know how to use them. However, it must here be admitted that Austria could hardly take the lead, struggling as she then was with the iron hand which lay so heavily upon her. England or Prussia was more fitted for such a post, both powers being, equally with Austria, interested in Napoleon's defeat. England had already paid, and was still paying, her debt to the cause of European liberty more largely than any other nation. Her inexhaustible subsidies belonged to whoever would take them, and for many years past had flowed like a river of gold into the exhausted treasuries of the Continent, while her fleets, without truce or intermission, blockaded all the coasts of Europe. In Spain she had done far more, for her army had there become the very mainspring of resistance, the solid centre round which the revolutionary forces gathered. In Italy her expeditions kept Murat in a constant state of alarm. The enormous preparations which she was now making against France, intended for some point as yet unknown, might prove of inestimable value to Germany, provided two conditions were observed: first, that the point of attack be well chosen, secondly, that the diversion be effected in time. From these two points of view, so far as it was possible to judge by appearances, the gigantic

enterprise boded ill. A selfish wish to destroy our establishment at Antwerp made the leaders of the expedition lose sight of the necessity of concentrating all their forces on the principal scene of action, in order to strike the decisive blow there. Holland, where according to some they intended to effect a powerful diversion, was too peculiar a battlefield, or too easily defended, to admit the possibility of any victory which might there be gained exercising marked influence on the ultimate issue of the war. Germany alone, in the space comprised between the Elbe and the Weser, offered the requisite base of operation. Hanover, the cradle of the British dynasty, would have risen at the first signal; Prussia, still wavering, would have been carried along; Jerome's feeble royalty would have fallen in an instant, and no barrier have stemmed the torrent of the advance up to the Danube. The organisers of the expedition not only failed to take these advantages into account, but appear not even to have understood the necessity of prompt decision. Their dilatoriness threatened to render useless the invaluable respite which a doubtful battle had afforded them. Days and weeks passed by, and Austria, in the extremity of despair, uttered cries of distress,—yet the same mystery still continued to hang over the destination of the English expedition.

But whatever the shortcomings, voluntary or involuntary, of the British Cabinet, by far the largest portion of responsibility for the coming events devolves upon the Prussian Government. Not only had Prussia ardently longed for the present war, but she had powerfully contributed to the organisation of the great conspiracy of the secret societies against Napoleon. Her statesmen, her generals, her officials of every class filled the ranks of the *Tugendbund*. Schill was the friend and brother of the Steins, the Scharnhorsts, the Blüchers. The whole army was burning to avenge the humiliations of Jena. Far from encountering any obstacle to their projects in the feelings of the people, the Prussian Cabinet found more difficulty in repressing than in exciting them. Our diplomatic agents, the generals and commanders of the fortresses we still occupied in Prussia—from Rapp at

Dantzic to Michaud at Magdeburg—were unanimous in testifying to the sentiments of hatred and deep enmity borne us by the Prussian nation. The Government kept them under control for the moment, merely by deceiving the population with the prospect of imminent war. The king's tendencies, though he still lived at Königsberg, were not more doubtful than those of his ministry, who sat at Berlin.

So thoroughly did the Cabinet of Vienna rely on the concurrence of Prussia, that the great importance given to the detachment sent to Poland under the Archduke Ferdinand was principally due to this alliance. And when the archduke, after having driven Poniatowski beyond the Vistula, advanced towards the frontiers of Old Prussia, receding at every step from his base of operation, he did so in the hope of soon joining hands with the Prussian armies. This hope, too, was grounded on positive assurances. The Prince of Orange had been the bearer of formal promises of speedy co-operation from King Frederick William to the emperor of Austria, and after Essling Francis II. considered that the moment had come to demand their performance. He sent Colonel Steigentesch to Königsberg with a letter[1] in which he recalled to the king of Prussia the assurances he had received from him, the identity of interest which united Prussia to Austria, and the necessity for prompt and energetic decision if they wished to put an end 'to the invasions and spoliations of the Emperor Napoleon.' That the hour for such a decision had come no one could deny. But Frederick William, a petty and undecided character, now showed the same want of resolution which he had shown at the period of Austerlitz. Suddenly confronted by the crisis which he had himself evoked, he grew troubled, hesitated, and endeavoured to hide his embarrassment by receiving the Colonel with excessive coldness and a reserve almost amounting to mistrust. He pretended to fear that 'if once engaged, Austria might abandon him in order to make a separate peace.' And when Steigentesch expressed his astonishment at

[1] Dated June 8, 1809.

having a question discussed which he thought was settled, the king betrayed the secret of his wavering by answering, that 'The time has not yet come. . . . If I were to declare myself now it would be my ruin. Strike one more blow, and I will come; but I will not come alone.'[1]

No language could more clearly express his willingness to share the fruits of victory but not the risks of battle. In this way the best chances of Napoleon's adversaries vanished one by one. The revolutionary enthusiasm of Germany spent itself in feverish and useless agitation. Prussian irritation exhausted itself in inactive and idle expectation, while British egotism advanced too slowly, and laid the foundation of fresh mistakes from having been too careful of its own interests. The only succour which Austria obtained, at the time when she most needed support, was from a co-operation, which in such critical circumstances, however, could not be of the slightest value. The Decree of Schönbrunn, which announced the union of the Papal States to the French Empire, having been published in Rome on the 18th of June 1809, Pius VII. at length resolved to fulminate against Napoleon the Bull of Excommunication long since drawn up, and which timidity alone had hitherto prevented him from issuing. At the conclusion of a long discussion, in which indignation, anguish, anger, fear, and all the most opposite sentiments were displayed, the feeble old man, at the instance of Cardinal Pacca, made up his mind to launch his anathema and denounce to the Catholic world the man whose fatal power he had so much contributed to strengthen. A touching spectacle, no doubt, if nothing else is to be seen in it but weakness struggling with force, but one full of salutary instruction for those who look upon it from a higher point of view.

Looking on Pius VII. merely as a defenceless old man opposed to a powerful and implacable foe, it is difficult not to yield to the pity naturally inspired by real misfortune. But think of him as the spiritual head of millions, the

[1] Despatch of Baron von Linden, Minister of Westphalia at Berlin, to Count Fürstenstein.

father of their consciences, and, as it were, the representative of God on earth, and it is impossible not to feel that his conduct must be viewed otherwise, and to ask what use he made of such unparalleled authority. It can never be wrong to judge a historical character from the point of view of the duties attached to his office and his person. Now Pius VII. solemnly ignored and neglected his duty when at the coronation he shared in the most questionable enterprises of the man whom he was now opposing. All Napoleon's usurpations at home and abroad, his *coups d'état*, treasons, and barbarities, even the murder of the Duc d'Enghien, he had condoned, with that profound indifference to morality which the clergy too often manifest when forced to choose between justice and the interests of religion. As long as he hoped to profit by so powerful an alliance he sanctioned everything. He threw the pontifical ægis round one who was both perjurer and murderer, and exerted all his moral force in protecting him against the lovers of justice. What had he to complain of now? He was but suffering from the same law which he had found fair and legitimate for others.

The consequences and punishment of such conduct were visible in the indifference with which both the downfall and the protests of the Pope were received. The pontifical thunder no longer, as of old, drowned the din of war. The anathema was lost amid the tumult of events which absorbed the attention of Europe; and if somewhat later public sympathy returned by degrees to Pius VII., it was due less to his character as Supreme Head of the Church, than to the patience, simplicity, and unalterable gentleness he displayed in the course of his long trials. Moreover, it became evident from the very beginning of his disputes with Napoleon, that the simple fact of his refusing to submit to the position assigned him rendered his residence in Rome impossible. Accustomed to obtain everything he wished for from the Holy See, either by menace or through fear, Napoleon seemed to have at first calculated upon the Pope's resignation. The salary of two millions which the Decree of Schönbrunn added to the pontifical revenue

appeared to him a sufficient guarantee for the docility of Pius VII. On the 17th of June he wrote to Murat, 'You have seen by my decrees *that I have behaved well to the Pope*, but it is on the condition of his keeping quiet. But if he chooses to collect intriguers at Rome like Cardinal Pacca,' he then added, '*it will be necessary to act in Rome* as I should act towards the Archbishop of Paris.' Two days later, on the 19th of June, no further illusion was possible, for Napoleon necessarily knew, at that date, of the excommunication published on the 10th of the same month, and of the protests which had been then made public. At all events on that day he gave instructions to Murat and to General Miollis which were so applicable to their actual position as to leave them no hesitation how to act. 'I have already informed you,' he wrote to Murat, 'that I intended the affairs of Rome to be dealt with vigorously, and no consideration accorded to any species of resistance. *No asylum must be respected* if my decrees are not submitted to, and under no pretext whatsoever must resistance be permitted. Should the Pope preach revolt, and wish to make use of the immunity of his house *in order to print circulars*, he must be arrested.'[1] General Miollis received instructions in the same sense and dated the same day.[2]

It was impossible to point in more precise terms to the contingency which had arisen. The order even went farther than this special case that had just occurred at Rome, for it authorised arrest for the simple fact of printing *circulars*, and what had now been published was an excommunication. Strange and remarkable is it, however, that on this, as on almost every occasion when he had to adopt a resolution with which he felt posterity might some day reproach him, Napoleon, usually so imperative in his style and tone, expressed himself conditionally; invariably contriving to have the possibility of saying, 'It is not I!' His order, in the present instance, though formal, was couched in general terms, as though he sought to throw the responsibility of the undertaking upon his agents.

[1] Napoleon to Murat, June 19, 1809.
[2] Napoleon to Miollis, June 19, 1809.

This supposition is justified, moreover, by the fact that no sooner had the event taken place than he washed his hands of it, repudiated it, condemned it, nay more, deplored it, writing of it to Fouché as 'an act of great folly, for which I am very sorry.'[1] He even expressed himself more strongly to Cambacérès, saying, 'It was without my orders and against my will that they made the Pope quit Rome.'[2] But he took good care not to undo the deed; for he wrote again, 'What is done, is done!' In the notes he dictated at St. Helena he endeavours to prove the necessity for the act, but he none the less casts all the responsibility upon the zeal of his agents.[3]

It remains to be explained how the singular phenomenon occurred, that when everything was inclining more and more towards passive obedience,—to a degree that almost paralysed his best generals,—agents ordinarily most servile, suddenly became bold the instant it was a question which might cost them their heads! Unfortunate agents! always over zealous! and precisely in the most important circumstances; in those most calculated to perplex them and to deter them from deciding for themselves! In the affair of the Duc d'Enghien, it was Savary's zeal; in the Spanish affairs, Murat's zeal; in the Pope's affairs, Miollis' zeal, which had spoiled everything. It is evident, no doubt, that they never suffered for such zeal; quite the contrary. Their master never punished them for it, except by fresh favours! None the less, it is a special feature in his star; for Napoleon, according to his own showing, was always compromised by too much zeal, though such things happen to no one else!

It must however be stated in vindication of these agents that they could not have acted with greater assurance and decision had they received the most positive and circumstantial orders from him, and it is impossible not to admit that they were more or less interested in making no mistake.

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, July 18, 1809.

[2] Napoleon to Cambacérès, July 23, 1809.

[3] Notes upon the 'Four Concordats' of the Abbé de Pradt, by Napoleon.

The instructions addressed to Murat and to Miollis were dated the 19th of June. On the 6th of July following, between two and three o'clock in the morning, at the same nocturnal hour which had been chosen for the treachery of Ettenheim, three detachments of French soldiers, led by General Radet, escaladed the walls of the Quirinal, and disarmed the Pope's guards. The General forced his way with some officers into the apartments of the Holy Father, summoned him in the name of the Emperor to renounce his temporal power for ever, and on his refusing announced to him that he had orders to carry him away prisoner. One of the witnesses of this lamentable act of violence testifies that the aged man, then making bitter reference to the past, exclaimed with a groan, 'This then is the gratitude your Emperor shows for all that I have done for him! this the reward of my great condescension towards him and towards the Church of France.'[1]

A few minutes afterwards Pope Pius VII. was rapidly hurried off to Florence in a carriage, the doors of which were locked, and surrounded by an escort of gendarmes.

The only country in Europe where this event might have produced an immediate reaction was Italy. But the government of the priests was too much detested there, and fear of reprisals on our part too deeply impressed on the mind of the population by various sanguinary lessons, to permit of any insurrection taking place. From the instant that the Archduke John had been forced, in support of his brother, to retreat from the Adige towards the Alps, all danger of this description had ceased to exist in the Peninsula; and the feeble symptoms of revolt which had manifested themselves in some quarters, especially at Padua, had given way to submission and habitual silence. Nor could the expeditions which the English were preparing at Palermo cause alarm on this ground; for, although sufficient to disquiet and harass Murat, they afforded no *point d'appui* for a movement of any consistency or strength.

[1] See and compare, regarding these events, the Memoirs of Cardinal Pacca, the two accounts by General Radet, and the very full account by Count d'Haussonville: *L'Eglise Romaine et le premier Empire.*

In fact, no diversion likely to compromise our affairs took place in Italy; less even than in Germany. Spain, on the other hand, was engaged at this particular moment in the most serious struggle that had as yet been undertaken against the French domination; distance, moreover, deprived Wellington's efforts of all direct influence on the issue of the war in Austria, and it was not until much later that his influence came to be strongly felt in the affairs of Europe. The Iberian peninsula, in fact, was nothing more, at that period, than a tilt-yard, where the combatants were left to themselves, with no possible power of assisting allies at remote distances. Their labours and their trials, moreover, require to be recounted separately.

This short statement shows that Austria, though having so much reason to hope for external aid and to count upon the support of those nations whose cause she was upholding, was nevertheless in the end obliged to rely upon herself alone—a basis, however, which is always the safest, especially for those states whose national existence is in any way menaced. Unfortunately she was ill adapted for a war of independence; paying in this respect a double penalty, that of her past and of her vicious organisation. Essentially and by nature a federal state, Austria had, thanks to the traditional despotism of her monarchy, become an almost united empire. But the cohesion due to this was thoroughly artificial, maintained by force alone, and produced, as a natural consequence, a great decrease of patriotic sentiment in the majority of her provinces, except perhaps in those which shared with the Imperial house in the benefits of so vast an administration. Hungary in particular, less exposed to the evils of invasion and less influenced by the fear of conquest, was far from showing that formidable military ardour of which she had given proof under Maria Theresa. The rising against the French on her territory, formed by a kind of militia which was called out in time of war, and on which great hopes had rested, advanced but slowly, and with inertness. Gallicia, a far more recent possession and the result of the partition of Poland, was only waiting for a signal to revolt against masters who were not yet firmly

established there. The Tyrol alone, where the Bavarian yoke was hated, showed enthusiasm befitting the circumstances. In every other part of the kingdom, whatever was not a strictly organised force lacked the elasticity and energy necessary to a nation desirous of saving herself.

In such a state of things but little effective support could be expected from the militia. At all times it is a force created by public spirit, and even when upheld by patriotic sentiment never offers much resistance. Little able as a rule to confront regular troops, it now boasted but very moderate military feeling, and the Archduke Charles was not the man capable of infusing into it the fire and ardour which it so much needed. His genius, essentially methodical and cold, was incapable of the conceptions requisite for a war based on enthusiasm. In the campaign which had just ended at Essling he had always been making preparations for attack, whilst obliged to end by fighting on the defensive. His confusion when confronted by Napoleon amounted to paralysis of his otherwise remarkable faculties, and he found it impossible to conceal the secret cause of his agitation even from his inferiors: 'But, Monseigneur!' exclaimed his aide-de-camp, General Bubna, at Ratisbon; 'imagine that instead of Napoleon you have Jourdan before you.'[1] At Essling the archduke had risen in his own estimation as well as in that of the army, but instead of deriving more courage and activity from this success, he only considered himself fortunate in having gained a victory over an adversary who inspired him with profound admiration, and he dreaded compromising it by too much boldness.

His army continued to occupy its old positions opposite the Isle of Lobau, although somewhat modified by the experience gained in the recent combats. He joined the three villages of Aspern, Essling, and Enzersdorf by a line of intrenchments mounted with artillery. This fortified line, however, threatened but one side of the island. That which extended from Enzersdorf to Mulheiten, at the

[1] Memoirs of Marmont.

bend of the Danube, upwards of a mile in length, was left uncovered, although it would have been easy to make it equally unapproachable.

The gap thus formed allowed Napoleon to take this fortified line by a flank movement, by which single defect all the defences were rendered useless. Its object, therefore, seemed to be to attract Napoleon to a battlefield selected and studied beforehand, rather than absolutely to bar the passage to him. The strategic positions which extended from the Bisamberg to Wagram and to Neusiedel had in fact been long known to him. Long prior to the battle of Essling, and before he had the least idea of the indelible mark they were to make on his military career, the archduke had quoted them in his work on tactics as model positions for defending the passage of a river. It could not have escaped his notice that the plain of the Marchfeld remained accessible to Napoleon, but he had contracted the opening to it and left him a free passage only on one side, so that he might be enabled to surprise him and drive him back anew to the Danube before the completion of his operation.

Besides these precautions, which the results proved were insufficient, he called in every detachment of which he thought it possible to dispose without injury to other important points. But this concentration was not carried out with that harmony or decision which the circumstances demanded. The Archduke Ferdinand was left in Poland, with a far larger number of troops than was required to keep Poniatowski in check. Archduke John,—who, after having failed to effect his junction with his brother at Linz, had retreated to Koermond,—was completely guided by his own inspirations; and as this prince, jealous of his brother's fame, was burning to create more solid claims to military renown than the victory at Sacile, it was to be feared that his turbulent personality might cause misfortunes similar to those at Hohenlinden.

Harassed in his retreat by Prince Eugène's corps, Archduke John had only collected on his road the remnants of Jellachich's troops, which had with difficulty escaped Le-

febvre's pursuit in the mountains of the Tyrol. He brought back but twenty-five thousand men to Koermond, where, however, he received some reinforcements from the Hungarian insurrection. But instead of withdrawing speedily to Presburg, whence he could easily have joined his brother, while occupying a position of the utmost importance to the ulterior operations of the campaign, he thought only of resuming the offensive on his own account, without attending either to his instructions or to the necessity of subordinating his operations to those of the chief army.

Whilst Napoleon's adversaries were frittering away precious time in inaction, in uncertainty, in ill-judged arrangements, and all the languor of endless procrastination,—thus losing advantages of which they recognised the true value only too late,—their enemy displayed an activity in collecting and multiplying his resources, which was stimulated by the sentiment of the dangers he had momentarily been exposed to. In the same degree that their resolutions were vague and their efforts desultory, his were precise, rapid, and directed straight to their object. Long since familiar with their lack of initiative and of vigour, with their tergiversations and their secret divisions which he had himself fomented, he had said to himself from the outset that, even putting matters at the worst and supposing that they were determined to go on to the very end, still he would gain upon them by quickness, and, if he could succeed in destroying the army of Archduke Charles in time, the insurrection which they were trying to create in Germany would either fall of itself or be of no importance. Insensible to his brother Jerome's cries of distress, he endeavoured to reassure him and to revive his energies, even whilst refusing to send him the reinforcements he demanded: 'The English are not to be feared; all their troops are in Spain and Portugal. They can do nothing in Germany; even so, *it will be time enough when they come!* . . . As to Schill, he need not be thought of, now that he has retreated towards Stralsund. Brunswick has not eight hundred men. Before making a movement, it is necessary to see clearly . . . *I always wait until an affair is ripe and I understand it*

well, before making any manœuvre. . . . Take things more quietly ; you have nothing to fear ; it is all mere noise.'[1]

Example could not have been better united to precept than by the Emperor at this moment. Never had the maxim of sacrificing the accessory to the principal, of which his military conceptions afford so many admirable examples, been applied with more activity and fitness ; never had this rule, which is true in every art, but truer perhaps in the art of war than in any other, been better understood, nor proof before given that the sacrifice it involves is all the more meritorious in war from the fact that it demands strength or mind quite as much as vigour of intellect. The complications which he most feared were to him, for the moment, as though they did not exist. No secondary event had power to draw him off from the great task he had primarily assigned to himself. In view of so many threatening contingencies, of surprises which became more probable from day to day, another man would have lost his head, or have wasted time in false moves, superfluous precautions, and premature measures ; but he never allowed these to occupy his thoughts, thoroughly convinced that the best precaution he could take against the perils he foresaw was first to overcome the greatest obstacle that stood in his way.

From the very morrow of Essling, therefore, every faculty of this formidable character was devoted to the one single aim of crossing the Danube and annihilating the Archduke Charles. Convinced that if he could achieve this object, all the rest would follow as a matter of course, he brought to bear upon it that fertility of invention and indefatigable eager will with which he attacked every difficulty, once he had ascertained its vital point. His first care was to transform his check at Essling into a victory, so as to influence public opinion, for no one ever knew better to what a degree assurance imposes upon mankind, especially in time of war, when it is half the battle. A circular from Maret, therefore, bore the news of our exploits at Essling throughout Germany, France, and Italy, and by the pen of his agents they

[1] Napoleon to Jerome, June 9, 1809.

were at once transformed into signal triumphs.[1] A few days later the truth was known, but the effect had been produced. In the eyes of that large number, who on such occasions create opinion, he retained that position of conqueror which his adversaries did not yet know how to take, and no matter how peremptory were their denials they only imperfectly succeeded in destroying an impression which was based on fear. Napoleon's bulletins immediately followed them, insisting, despite every assertion to the contrary, 'that the manœuvres of *General Danube* alone had saved the Austrian army.'[2]

His efforts to ruin the princes of the House of Austria in the estimation of their people were less happy, though not less persevering. There was scarcely a bulletin that did not contain some imputation against them, calculated to impress the popular mind. He especially reproached them with those evils which fall heaviest on the poorer classes, such as want and famine, although they were only the natural consequences of war. '*The rage* of the princes of the House of Lorraine *against the town of Vienna*,' he said, 'can be described by one single trait—namely, the capital is fed by means of forty mills on the left bank of the river: they have had them taken away and destroyed!'[3] Knowing of old the credulity with which a populace accepts this sort of grievance, he accused the enemy of stopping the convoys of provisions in order to starve out Vienna, and he recalled 'Our Henri Quatre,' who himself fed the capital he was besieging.[4]

But it was above all in honour of the Italian populations that Napoleon deemed it wise at this moment to employ eloquence in his bulletins. This master, ordinarily so exacting and so hard, was to-day lavish in his expressions of studied gratitude to them. The Italians, who had seen their yoke changed so often since the fall of the Venetian Republic, had, during the short apparition of Archduke John in the provinces of Northern Italy, after his victory

[1] *Mémoires* de Beugnot.
[2] 13th bulletin of the Army of Germany.
[3] *Ibid.* [4] 14th bulletin.

at Sacile, maintained that silent, impassive attitude which seemed least likely to compromise them. Napoleon, whose ardent desire it now was to have such conduct everywhere imitated, especially in the provinces of the Confederation of the Rhine, exalted their wise circumspection into a real prodigy of fidelity and patriotism. 'The people of Italy behaved as the people of Alsace, of Normandy, or of the Dauphiné might have done. They accompanied our soldiers in their retreat with good wishes and *tears!* . . . The proclamations of Archduke John inspired only contempt and scorn. . . . Amongst seven millions of men, the enemy found but three wretched beings who had not rejected their seductive offers. . . . And their reward was not long in coming. . . . That beautiful part of the Continent which the court of Rome,—which that cloud of monks,—had ruined, was now about to reappear with honour on the stage of the world.'

On the eve of the same day (May 27) he had issued a grandiloquent address of thanks to the army of Italy which Prince Eugène had just conducted to the Semmering, to effect its junction with the army of Germany. This army of Italy had partly repaired the disasters attending its outset, but its exploits weighed less in Napoleon's appreciation than the fact of the important help which its arrival afforded him. He lavished praise on the soldiers in the same manner as on the Italian people, less for what they had done than for what he intended to ask them to do later. But in reality he knew well how little he could count on the submission of his Italian subjects, and his private correspondence reveals a much lower tone of satisfaction than that which he had so well feigned in his address. 'My son!' he wrote to Prince Eugène on the very same day that he published his felicitations in the order of the day, 'I am aware that there are individuals in Padua who have behaved ill; report them to me that I may make striking examples of them. I know that the Mayor of Udine has been cowardly enough to take off his decoration. . . . *If any great family in Padua has behaved badly, I will destroy it root and branch,—father, brother, cousin,—*

so that it may serve as an example in the annals of Padua. Put into force, with greater rigour than ever, the decree *against Italians who have taken up arms against us.*'[1]

But this bad humour only betrayed itself to his confidants; to every one else his aim was to appear as the happiest and most adored of sovereigns. He wished to convince Europe that he had contracted an indissoluble union with Italy, and, in order to produce this effect on the public mind, he broke forth at every opportunity into blessings, expressions of gratitude, and liberal promises. Paradisi having, in the name of the Italian Senate, presented him with some tardy protestations of fidelity, which would have been of more value had the Austrians at the time been in possession of Milan, or had they been voted before Archduke John's retreat, Napoleon replied by declarations, the phraseology of which, borrowed from ideologists, forms a curious contrast to the cynical professions of faith he so often expressed in regard to the Italian *canaille.* He congratulated the people of Italy 'on having rejected with contempt and indignation the calumnious suggestions and incentives to revolt that had been made to them by the princes of that ungrateful and false house, whose sceptre of lead had, during so many centuries, lain heavily upon our unfortunate Italy. . . . Providence,' he added, 'has reserved for me the singular consolation of seeing it united beneath my laws, *reviving by those grand and liberal ideas which our ancestors were the first among modern nations to proclaim after the ages of barbarism.*'[2] Our ancestors when in Paris were Charlemagne and his successors, but at Milan they were the Italians of the *Renaissance;* they were changed according to the locality. As to the liberal ideas, their appreciation depended altogether upon the particular period. The danger once past, the Italians quickly learned what to think of such flattering assurances.

The artifices used to bring back waverers, to restore his *prestige,* and to obtain the moral effect he desired to pro-

[1] Napoleon to Eugène, May 28, 1809 (Memoirs of Prince Eugène).
[2] To Paradisi, June 16, 1809.

duce on Europe, were only subsidiary to the immense works which Napoleon achieved for the strengthening of his military situation. To concentrate all his troops upon one given point, so as to become invincible in that particular spot, and to diminish, and by degrees remove, the obstacle presented to him by the Danube, was the double problem he set himself to solve, and to which he applied all the powers of his genius. In the first place he persisted in crossing the Danube at the very same spot where his first attempt had failed, and he has himself explained the motive of this resolve somewhat later in a letter addressed to Eugène, who proposed his passing it opposite Raab. He wrote to him as follows: 'From Raab to Vienna is six days' march. If I had a bridge in the position where you now are, I could not cross the Danube there, for whilst I was crossing near Raab, Prince Charles would cross the river behind me at Vienna. In two days he would have made a bridge. Now Raab is not worth Vienna; my centre and my line of communication would be upset, and I should find myself in a bad position.'[1] And if he were to retrograde to Linz in order to take advantage of the bridge there, the inconvenience, though less, would still be very great, as he would equally run the risk of losing Vienna. The Isle of Lobau still seemed to him the most favourable point for this operation. He had made it bristle with artillery,—transformed it into an impregnable fort. His best troops were assembled there under command of Masséna; and they were thoroughly familiar with the ground and the adjacent positions. His first care was to secure their communications with the right bank; a task relatively easy to accomplish, for on the one hand, the rise of the Danube, which had proved so fatal to our bridges of boats during the two days of Essling, daily showed signs of diminishing, while on the other, the right bank was protected from being turned by the enemy, by Davout who was quartered in the neighbourhood of Presburg, by Montbrun's cavalry which cleared the road to Hungary, by Bernadotte's corps which on being recalled to

[1] To Eugène, June 19.

Vienna guarded the Danube from that town to Krems where Vandamme was posted, and finally by Lauriston who joined hands with Prince Eugène near the Semmering.

He was anxious that, this time, his bridges should be secure from every accident, even from the fireships and the mills which the Austrians purposely launched into the river against them. By his orders General Bertram constructed two bridges on piles 800 yards long. One was sufficient for the passage of three carriages abreast, the other, being especially destined for the infantry, was only eight feet wide. Both were protected from the fireships by stockades also formed of piles, and guarded night and day by boats manned by the Marines of the Guard. A bridge of boats was likewise made to render the communications more rapid.

These works, which were finished in twenty days, excited universal admiration. It were puerile, however, to compare them to the bridge thrown across the Rhine in eight days by Cæsar, although Napoleon had the bad taste himself to suggest this theme to his future historians in his twenty-fourth bulletin of the Army of Germany, one which with their customary complaisance they have not failed to amplify.[1] With the incalculable resources afforded in our days by a capital like Vienna, it will always be easy to repeat this pretended miracle of constructing two bridges on piles within twenty days; for an active engineer and some thousand workmen are all that is necessary for it. One is not more justified in comparing them to the bridge thrown by Cæsar across the Rhine amidst the forests of Germany, then in a savage state, than of likening the passage of Mount Saint Bernard to the passage of the Alps by Hannibal. Besides, the most important and best conceived portion of the operation which Napoleon was preparing was by no means the construction of the two bridges across the principal arm of the Danube, and which joined

[1] 'Cæsar's bridge,' said he, while claiming for himself all the advantage of the comparison, 'was thrown across, no doubt, in eight days; *but no carriage could pass over it*' (24th bulletin). It is unnecessary to point out the pettiness of such a comparison.

the Isle of Lobau to the right bank; far more worthy of such praise was the astounding feat by which he was enabled within two hours, and in presence of the Austrian army, simultaneously to throw six bridges across the small arm separating the island from the left bank. On that day, as during the previous days of Essling, the archduke's calculations were based upon the presumed impossibility of marching an army of two hundred thousand men in one night across the narrow pathways of two or even of three bridges; it never occurred to him that it would be possible to create a kind of movable floor which should all but suppress the Danube, and allow our army to manœuvre as if on terra firma.

Whilst these great works were in course of execution, some beneath the very eyes of the inhabitants, others skilfully concealed from the knowledge of the enemy, Napoleon displayed an activity and talent no less worthy of admiration in the distribution of his military forces. We have already seen that Prince Eugène, so early as the 27th of May, had brought to him the principal corps of the army of Italy, numbering from 30,000 to 40,000 men, having first retaliated on the Archduke John in several successful combats, especially at Tagliamento, at Malthorghetto, and at Tarvis. A strong detachment of this army had remained behind, under the orders of Macdonald, to follow and fight the Ban of Croatia, Giulay, whom John had left in Styria. Macdonald was at Grätz, with about twenty thousand men.[1] Still farther back stood Marmont, with eleven thousand, whom he was bringing up from the depths of Dalmatia, after a long and difficult march, during which he had had at every step to fight the insurgents of Croatia under Stoisewitch. Marmont was still at Laybach, in Carniola. These two corps, besides operating their junction with the army of Italy, were ordered to destroy the remnants of Giulay's troops and to prevent the detachment of Chastelar from rejoining Archduke John, just as Eugène had stopped that

[1] This number is deduced from Napoleon's own statement, estimating the total of the reinforcements brought to him by Eugène at sixty thousand men (To Bernadotte, May 27, 1809).

of Jellachich. Napoleon attached the greatest importance to the capture of the Marquis de Chastelar, a Belgian *émigré*, to whom he wrongly attributed our want of success in the Tyrol. He ordered that as soon as taken he should be shot, to make what he called an example. From the moment of its arrival at the Semmering, Eugène employed his army in accomplishing the task traced out for it by Napoleon. Archduke John had not left Koermond. It was essential, on the one hand, to deprive him of every chance of attacking Macdonald, and on the other, to force him to cross the Danube at the most distant point possible. This could be done by outflanking him on the left, and threatening thus to place him between two fires, between the corps of Davout and of Eugène. The Viceroy, consequently, had to march from Oedenburg on Koermond by Güns and Stainamanger, and then to descend the Raab, following his adversary step by step. By this manœuvre the nearest point at which Archduke John could cross the Danube would be Komorn, and in such a case the circuit he would have to make in order to join his brother would be much longer than that which Eugène would require to join Napoleon.

This concentric movement, impressed upon his army at this time by Napoleon, gradually brought back under his own hand every disposable force he possessed, not only in Germany, but also in France and Italy. He had even made the regiments quartered at Rome leave that city,[1] and the last recruits, levied in anticipation of 1810, though as yet mere raw soldiers who had been incorporated into and drilled by our depôts on the Rhine, were now marched to the Danube. Such troops as were either occupying the Tyrol or forming corps of observation in its neighbourhood, under orders of Lefebvre and of Wrede, were sent to Linz, there to replace the Saxons under Bernadotte, called off to Vienna, but who thus left several Bavarian garrisons so completely uncovered that they were speedily surrounded by insurrectionary forces. Vandamme assisted Lefebvre by occupying Krems with the Würtembergers, while Junot

[1] To Murat, May 28, 1809.

organised the conscripts of the Confederation on the Main.

In his anxiety to utilise and group around him every force capable of serving his purpose, Napoleon was led on to a singular proceeding, that has been hitherto unrecorded, but which deserves notice as alike illustrating his unscrupulousness and the power with which a dominant idea took possession of his mind. At that moment of feverish activity, when his piercing vision was everywhere seeking for arms and men with the view of massing them together on the spot he had chosen for a fresh struggle, his eye, which overlooked nothing, fell upon a Russian squadron then anchored in the port of Trieste. At once the idea struck him of enrolling the crews, of forming them into battalions and of bringing them to the Danube. Consequently, he ordered the commanding officer of the squadron, the subject of an allied sovereign, it is true, but not under his orders, to dismantle his vessels instantly, to transport his 'artillery, his ammunition, cordage, anchors, sails, etc.' to Venice, and finally to send his crews to Palmanova, where they would be formed into an organised corps and thence despatched to Vienna. The same order was to be given to the Russian flotilla off Venice. In prescribing this extraordinary manœuvre to this officer, Napoleon did not precisely tell him that he had the formal consent of the Emperor Alexander, but he wrote to him in so many words '*that this order was conformable to the intentions of the Czar*,' adding that his object was 'to prevent the Russian vessels falling into the hands of the Austrians or of the English.' The Admiral refused to obey. This singular order can be properly understood only by imagining the reception Napoleon would have given any one of his own Admirals who had obeyed a similar injunction in a Russian port (June 16).

Quitting Oedenburg on the 5th of June, Prince Eugène continued his march against Archduke John. On the 7th he reached Güns, and on the 9th was joined by Macdonald at Koermond. This latter general had left a part of his *corps d'armée* before the citadel of Grätz, with orders to

join Marmont on the fall of that place. The archduke had reascended the Raab as far as St. Gothard; from thence he had turned off to Papa, where Montbrun, who was following him closely, attacked his rear-guard in a brilliant cavalry engagement. On the 13th of June the two armies found themselves in presence of each other, beneath the walls of the town of Raab.

Archduke John had resolved to give us battle. Nothing could be more inopportune, or more contrary to the interests of the monarchy, than such a determination; for, even supposing it to be crowned with success, it could only end in a fruitless victory. According to General Marziani's testimony, the archduke's principal officers were for the most part opposed to an effusion of blood which they considered at least useless, as in any case it would be necessary to recross the Danube. There was so large a force too behind the line defended by Prince Eugène, that even were he to suffer any check at this point he could quickly have repaired it.

Moreover, even under the most favourable conditions, they could not expect to beat us. Eugène had been reinforced by several regiments composed of our best troops. He possessed so great a numerical majority, that he was enabled, without the slightest inconvenience, to leave Macdonald's corps behind him at Papa;[1] and, in case of a reverse, he could easily fall back either on this detachment or on Davout's corps. The archduke, on the contrary, had received no reinforcements, except some badly disciplined troops from the insurrection in Hungary, brought to him by his brother Raynier, and his army numbered less than thirty thousand men. From the moment that he missed the opportunity of crossing the Danube at Presburg, in accordance with his instructions from Archduke Charles, there was but one rational course open to him, that of crossing it as quickly as possible at

[1] This detachment, for which he was later reproached as for a military fault, was recommended to him by Napoleon himself (in a letter dated June 10), in order to secure 'the rear of the Army of Italy.' See the Memoirs of Prince Eugène.

Komorn, and leaving the task of harassing and surprising our cantonments in the hands of the insurgent corps. But Archduke John was possessed by the desire of acting on his own account and making for himself a military reputation which should rival that of his brother. He therefore awaited his adversary in positions not, on the whole, unskilfully selected—his right resting on the strong town of Raab, his centre protected by the solid intrenchments of the farm of Kismegyer, his left covered by marshes; in short his whole line of battle formed upon the plan of keeping his communications with Komorn free whatever might happen.

The combat commenced about mid-day on the 14th of June 1809, the anniversary of Marengo. Montbrun had the honour of leading the attack. After driving in the enemy's outposts he tried to outflank the archduke's left, which was chiefly composed of cavalry, when the action became general. The Severoli and Durutte divisions marched upon the village of Szabadhegy occupied by the Austrian left, while the Grenier and Séras divisions rushed forward to take the Kismegyer farm where the enemy's centre was intrenched. These two attacks, received with unwonted vigour, were stoutly repulsed. The Severoli division had to retire to its positions with considerable loss, when the Austrians emerged from the village in pursuit, but were forced on their side to withdraw anew within shelter of their intrenchments by Durutte who advanced to support his colleague. Séras was not more fortunate at Kismegyer, where a fierce struggle took place. Nor did our soldiers, despite their desperate assaults, make the slightest impression on the fortified farm, the area of which was covered with our dead. But a general charge of all our cavalry, directed by Montbrun and Grouchy, having made the troops on the outskirts of the farm give way, its defenders, finding themselves unsupported, began to falter, though as yet continuing their fire with spirit, and without thought of surrender. At length, after a long and sanguinary resistance they succumbed beneath the united efforts of Generals Séras and Roussel. The doors were burst open

with hatchets, and our soldiers, highly incensed, rushed in through the breach, massacring all before them; then, in order to finish the matter more quickly, they set fire to the farm buildings, when the last survivors of this butchery were burnt alive. These horrors over, all the regiments thus released from operations in the centre were despatched to the support of the Durutte and Severoli divisions, which, owing to this reinforcement, succeeded in carrying the village of Szabadhegy. Victory, long disputed, declared itself in our favour, and the army of Archduke John rushed in full retreat towards Komorn, after having lost about three thousand men killed and wounded, and fifteen hundred taken prisoners. Our loss amounted to upwards of two thousand five hundred disabled.[1]

The battle of Raab, independently of its immediate results, which consisted in opening up the approach to Hungary, and making the defences of the town fall into our hands after a few days' siege, was of the utmost importance in its moral effect. It caused dismay and intimidation in the ranks of the enemy, paralysed their measures, disconcerted their projects, and prevented their reaping the benefit of some partial advantages gained by them at this period. The Tyrolese insurrection had become more threatening than ever in response to the voice of Andrew Hofer, but now we were content to circumscribe it, until able to stifle it later. The entrances to the Tyrol were closed by well-selected posts, occupied by the troops of Generals Deroi, Lefebvre, and Rusca, after which the revolt was allowed to exhaust itself on the spot. Insurrectionary attempts in Franconia were promptly suppressed by the king of Würtemberg; and lastly, the incursions of the duke of Brunswick-Oels into Saxony brought him but few partisans, although the sympathy of the population was almost unanimous in his favour. Time, irreparable time, was gliding away, whilst Napoleon's adversaries had already in great

[1] Prince Eugène's *Correspondance;* 19th bulletin of the Army of Germany; *Histoire de la campagne de* 1809, by General Pelet; Jomini; *Mémoires* of Marshal Grouchy, published by the Marquis de Grouchy.

part lost the benefit of the two days of Essling, from not having seized the opportunity with the necessary energy and decision. Enthusiasm is catching, but no one is carried away by it unless the leaders themselves give the impulse; here, on the contrary, their indecision communicated itself to every one. Even those who at first had been the most ardent now wished to wait for some more decided success before openly declaring themselves.

In Styria and in Carinthia, where a portion of Macdonald's corps had been left, occupied in besieging the citadel of Grätz under Broussier's orders, and where Marmont's small army was instructed to intercept Chastelar's detachment, Napoleon's views were but imperfectly realised; nevertheless, he attained his principal object, that of collecting all his troops on the Danube. Marmont, anxious to recruit his men after the fatigue of a long march, committed the fault of halting at Laybach for nearly a fortnight, from the 3d to the 16th of June, thus allowing Chastelar to escape by Klagenfurth. Broussier, in his impatience to effect a junction with Marmont, was on his side imprudent enough to leave a single regiment before Grätz, which was at once assailed by a force five times stronger; but both promptly repaired their errors, the former by several times beating detachments of the Ban of Croatia, Giulay; the latter, by the timely rescue of the brave troops he had thus endangered. A few days later they arrived under the walls of Vienna together, to join hands with the Grand Army of Germany.

The arrival of these last detachments completed the effective strength of the army which Napoleon intended to throw across the Danube for the purpose of crushing Archduke Charles. All his arrangements were now finished, and the moment had arrived to strike the last blow. Five weeks had passed since Essling. But he had not lost one minute of that time, while his adversaries had spent it in false moves, ill-judged or useless proceedings. Supported on one side by the line of the Raab, on the other by the corps placed in echelon along the Danube as far as Linz, he was but little troubled by the affrays, less

serious than noisy, that had taken place at more distant points. He had only one fear; that the Archduke Charles, divining his projects, might be tempted at the last moment to cross the Danube at Komorn or Presburg, whilst he was passing it at Lobau. With the view to guard against this danger, he had ordered Davout to destroy the bridge of boats held by the Archduke at Presburg, but as the Austrians attached equal importance to its preservation, the Marshal's efforts had been unsuccessful. The bridge at Presburg was protected not only by advanced works, but by solid intrenchments constructed in the islands formed by the Danube opposite the town. The battalions stationed in those islands baffled all our attempts at destroying the bridge, and nothing could dislodge them, not even showers of grape and balls. Napoleon then had recourse to an extraordinary expedient in order to force the Austrian troops to evacuate the islands. It was not by cannonading the positions occupied by these troops, but simply by bombarding the inoffensive town of Presburg itself, hoping to extract from the enemy by the sight of the misery inflicted on the unfortunate inhabitants what the courage of our troops could not wrest from him. In general, no town is bombarded unless for the purpose of forcing the enemy to evacuate it; but, on this occasion, this cruel measure was adopted, according to Napoleon's own words, with the view of forcing the enemy *into Presburg*,[1] after having abandoned the islands. And Napoleon in no way shrank from the consequences of so odious a proceeding. In the same letter he writes, 'As they have made preparations at Presburg for crossing the river, and as that town is a centre of magazines, it *must be set on fire and burnt*.'[2]

In the summons to surrender sent to Presburg, Davout alleged as a cause some pretended 'movements on the quays, and works on the heights,' but the only real object he had in view was the evacuation of the islands still obstinately refused to him. Davout was dreaded for the harshness of his character, even in an army whose chiefs, for the most part, were no longer renowned for their

[1] Napoleon to Davout, June 23, 1809, 1st letter. [2] *Ibid.*

generosity or noble sentiments. In this instance, however, he acted unwillingly. Still he performed the painful task with vigorous exactitude, and reported it in the twenty-third bulletin in the following false words: 'The enemy was *working at fortifications.* An order was sent to him to stop the works, but he disregarded it. Four thousand bombs and shells forced him to abandon the project. But this *unfortunate town* took fire and several quarters in it have been burnt.' The truth is that the enemy had neither ceased working nor evacuated the islands. Marshal Davout, seeing,—according to a rather expressive euphemism,—that his severity produced no results, *yielded to a feeling of humanity:* in other words, abstained from totally destroying a city, the destruction of which would have been useless to him. He however succeeded in carrying the *tête de pont*, and in raising round the village of Engereau, right opposite the islands, a series of intrenchments under cover of which a few thousand men could, for a certain time, prevent the enemy leaving the town. According to Napoleon's calculations, four thousand men and a cavalry regiment left at Presburg under Baraguay d'Hilliers, twelve hundred men at Raab, as many more at Klagenfurth, with three thousand at Bruck, were sufficient to form a curtain that would keep the Austrians in check or might at least deceive them, while Prince Eugène's and Davout's corps were advancing by forced marches to the Isle of Lobau. Thus, in three days at the most, all our united forces might find it possible to assemble on the same field of battle, before the archduke would be able to concentrate his forces there.[1]

The preparations for the rapid and instantaneous passage of the small arm of the Danube, which had been skilfully concealed from the enemy owing to the multiplicity of inner channels amongst the islands, were completed at the very moment that the concentration of the army was effected. The construction of the two bridges upon piles and of the stockades had rendered it unnecessary to think any longer about the principal arm of the river; in fact,

[1] Napoleon to Eugène and to Davout, June 29, 1809.

it might be almost regarded as suppressed, so easy had its use become to our troops. Napoleon's mind had also been devoted to making the passage of the small arm still more simple and easy. No means failing him for this object, neither in arms, instruments, or in *matériel*, it was evident that a genius like his, taught, moreover, by the sanguinary lesson of Essling, would not a second time commit the same mistake. All his faculties, in short, were applied to the solution of the problem, how, in place of renewing the successive and spasmodic attacks of Essling, he could face the enemy with all his united forces. This solution, very simple in theory if not in practice, consisted in so multiplying the modes of passage, as to be able in one night to throw his whole army on that part of the bank which the archduke had had the imprudence to leave uncovered.

The Isle of Lobau forms a kind of irregular triangle with rounded corners, the base of which extends along the right bank of the Danube, opposite our old positions, whilst its two upper sides face the left bank, then occupied by the Austrians. One of these two sides was menaced in front by the fortified works that connected the three villages of Aspern, Essling, and Enzersdorf; the other, nearly a league in length, looked across the river over an open plain, where a few detachments of scouts might now and then be seen, while in the distance was the small castle of Sachsengang, held by the Austrian troops more as a post of observation than of resistance. It was at this large opening thus left free that Napoleon resolved to make his army cross. In the channels formed by the small islands that lie laterally to the Isle of Lobau, he had amassed the materials requisite for making fully six bridges; bridges of rafts, of boats, of pontoons, even a bridge constructed in one single piece, fastened to the shore by one end only, the movable portion of which was to be carried across from one bank to the other in a few minutes by the mere force of the current. Decisive measures had been taken to protect the operation from any attack on the part of the enemy. All the approaches to the Isle of Lobau were covered by artillery,

but as the village of Enzersdorf was the most advanced Austrian position on the side where the passage across the river was contemplated, and the one, consequently, whence it would be most easy to fall upon our flanks during the execution of this manœuvre, fifty-eight pieces of artillery were concentrated at a given point commanding this unfortunate village, which they were to burn and raze to the ground in a few moments.[1] Other batteries erected somewhat more to the right, on the eastern point of the island, were intended to annihilate every corps belonging to the enemy that might dare to venture into the neighbouring plain. Their fire was to be seconded by several gunboats manned by Marines of the Guard. And, in order that the construction of the bridges should not be impeded even by an Austrian patrol, ferry-boats capable of conveying fifteen hundred men were to land on the opposite bank a whole division, instructed to drive off the enemy's outposts.

When all these arrangements were terminated, orders, dictated beforehand by Napoleon with the most rigorous precision, regulated every detail of their execution. He pointed out to his generals the direction each should follow, the position each *corps d'armée* should occupy, named the hour at which the ferry-boats should quit the shore, the spot where the cables should be fixed that were used for their movement backwards and forwards, the precise moment when the cannonade should commence, the measures necessary to be taken for guarding the bridges and the island.[2] The powerful means of action thus collected by his activity were set in motion with such admirable foresight, and were blended with such harmony and at the same time such minute precision, that their success was infallible on the data upon which Napoleon speculated. From the moment that Archduke Charles vainly hoped to retard—not to prevent—our passage, and thus to entice our divided army to a battlefield chosen by him, from the moment that he restricted his efforts to contracting the space where we

[1] Distribution of artillery in the Isle of Lobau, June 20, 1809.

[2] Order for the passage of the Danube, July 2, 1809; 2d Order, July 4, 1809.

might cross the river—nay, more, contracting it insufficiently, instead of completely closing access to it as he might have done,—from that moment the obstacle presented by the Danube no longer existed for our army. Thanks to Napoleon's precautions, it was about to manœuvre exactly as if on terra firma, and in full force to confront the enemy who would thereby lose all the advantages of their position.

The night of the 4th of July was chosen for the great undertaking. Secrecy was more than ever essential to the success of the operation. From the 3d of July we detained the messengers sent by the enemy with a flag of truce to our camp. At the same time we employed various devices to persuade the enemy that we were preparing to cross the Danube at the same spot as on the day of Essling. On the 2d of July our troops took possession amid great noise of the Mill-island, situated opposite Aspern. On the 3d of July General Legrand, under fire of the Austrian redoubts, occupied the little wood where our first landing had been effected. The evening of the same day, at nightfall, Bernadotte's corps, Bessières' cavalry and the Guard successively arrived and took up the positions assigned for them in the Isle of Lobau, which was already occupied by Masséna's and Oudinot's corps. On the evening of the 4th the corps of Marmont, of Prince Eugène, and finally that of Davout, who had cleverly slipped away after having masked his lines before Presburg, advanced in their turn into the island. Towards ten o'clock that evening almost the entire army was there assembled. The two banks were still silent; but if on the enemy's side every one was asleep, on ours every one was on foot and ready. The night was thick, the sky impenetrably dark, rain, accompanied by violent gusts of wind, began to fall, and soon poured down in torrents.

At that moment, boats filled with light-infantry of the Conroux brigade, and escorted by the gunboats of Captain Baste, were noiselessly unfastened from the southern bank of the Isle of Lobau. They glided in the darkness to the small arm of the Danube, then touched the left bank below Mulheiten, where our soldiers at once attacked the Austrian outposts. This volley of musketry gave the signal. The

front of the Isle of Lobau was instantly lit up by the fire of a hundred and twenty guns, whilst a sham attack, led by Legrand, held back at Aspern and Essling the Klenau grenadiers who guarded those fortified positions. The houses at Enzersdorf were first shattered to pieces by the guns of our batteries, and then set on fire by our shells, and the flying bridge, issuing from the canal of Alexander island, in a few minutes afforded a solid footing for our infantry, a hundred and sixty yards in length. Three other bridges were successively thrown across, opposite the different stations where our army-corps had taken up their positions; at two o'clock in the morning we possessed four, a little later we had six, which rendered our issue from the Isle of Lobau as easy as it could have been on any ground whatever, for no road, however wide we may suppose it, could offer accommodation equal to this. During the whole night our troops defiled without encountering any obstacle on the left bank, except a few detachments which they captured, or which rapidly fled at their approach. Immediately on landing, our *corps d'armée* ranged themselves and deployed according to the order they were to occupy in the forthcoming battle; on the left that of Masséna, in the centre that of Oudinot, on the right Davout's corps, backed in the second line by those of Bernadotte, of Eugène, and of Marmont, and by the Bavarians under Wrede, the whole supported by a reserve of the Guard and heavy cavalry. The total strength of our forces cannot be estimated at less than from one hundred and eighty to two hundred thousand men.[1] Those of Archduke

[1] This estimate, systematically reduced according to custom, can be attained only by the known strength of each corps at the outset of the campaign, allowance being made for probable losses. Our calculation supposes that they had lost, since then, nearly half their effective strength, which is far from being the truth. Napoleon had at that period almost his entire army with him, except a few detachments placed under the orders of Lefebvre, Vandamme, and Baraguay d'Hilliers. Some of his *corps d'armée* counted three, others four divisions of infantry alone. That of Prince Eugène, not the most numerous, alone counted thirty-two thousand men *present at the battle*, without including the detachment left on the Raab. Marmont

Charles would scarcely have numbered so many even had all his troops been collected. But of this number twenty thousand men were still at Presburg under Archduke John, who had not responded to his brother's call in time; about twelve thousand others formed a corps of observation off Vienna under command of Prince Reuss; six or seven thousand were before Nussdorf, and as many more before Krems. His army, therefore, was inferior to ours by about forty thousand men, but this was owing to his own fault. Nor is it easy to understand why Napoleon's panegyrists invariably try to deprive him of the merit of numerical superiority, while he displayed such fertility of resource in securing it under every contingency, and that according to his own maxims he made all the art of war consist in knowing how to be found superior to the enemy in strength on a particular point, at any given time.

Sunrise saw almost our whole army deployed in battle array on that part of the plain of the Marchfeld which extends from Enzersdorf to Vittau. Enzersdorf was nothing but a smoking mass of ruins, behind which a few battalions still held their ground. Masséna, who formed our left, drove them from it, and then, the entire army wheeling round Enzersdorf, advanced right forward, taking, by the mere fact of their onward march, not only the castle of Sachsengang, but also the fortified works of Essling and Aspern, which were turned and occupied without resistance. Forced to evacuate them, Klenau fell back on Stadlau and Kagran, where he formed the Austrian right, joining Kollowrath whose *corps d'armée* was quartered near Gerasdorf. The archduke's line, completed by this manœuvre, presented a vast semicircle, the extreme right leaning on Stadlau, Gerasdorf's centre at Wagram, and his left extending from Wagram to Neusiedel. Although the rapidity of our man-

asserts that he saw, with his own eyes, returns giving the total number of combatants at Wagram at one hundred and sixty-seven thousand men, which comes near our calculation. Finally, according to an official report, dated the 1st June, the total of all the French and allied troops which we had in Germany amounted to two hundred and eighty-six thousand men *present under arms*.

œuvre had taken them by surprise, his army was still well prepared for the combat; it occupied strong positions, his right ranged upon the heights as on an amphitheatre, while his left was covered by a deep though narrow stream, the Russbach. He could no longer hope to attack us during the operation nor before we were fully formed, as he had intended, but he was quite capable of sustaining a defensive battle.

Towards six o'clock that evening, having encountered but partial resistance, our move was crowned with complete success, for the French army took up its position in a line concentric with that of the enemy, its left being at Aspern, its centre at Raasdorf, and its right at Glinzensdorf. Napoleon, believing the archduke to be ill prepared, and above all to be weak owing to the immense extension of his line, thought that a strong, sudden, sharp attack on his centre might gain us some decided advantages, even though the day was then far advanced. If this bold stroke were fully successful, we should find ourselves in the centre of the enemy's positions from the outset, and the Austrian army, cut in two, would have hardly any alternative but to retreat. In pursuance of this plan Oudinot advanced rapidly on Baumersdorf, while Prince Eugène and Bernadotte endeavoured to carry the platform of Wagram, the key of the Austrian positions. But the Russbach, which here covered the archduke's front, opposed a much more serious obstacle than had been anticipated, and the enemy, far from being inclined to give way, received the attack with extreme vigour. Oudinot, on his side, in vain attempted to enter Baumersdorf, though his troops were led back to it several times. At length Bernadotte succeeded in crossing the stream, and, rushing on with the Saxons to Wagram, held it for some minutes; it was but for a few minutes however, for, speedily overpowered by superior numbers, and weakened by the withdrawal of the Dupas division detached to support Oudinot,[1] he too had to yield, and at once to retire upon Aderklaa. Prince Eugène, also, who tried to ascend the plateau to the right of Wagram, met

[1] Letter of General Gersdorf to Gourgaud.

with a similar fate despite the courage displayed by Macdonald and by Grenier. Noteworthy is it, moreover, that these three corps in no way supported each other. Thus failed this rash and ill-concerted attack (July 5, 1809).

Napoleon in his twenty-fifth bulletin attributes his failure to the mistake made by some Saxon and French soldiers in firing on each other. But this episode, if it really took place, which is doubtful, as it is not generally mentioned by eye-witnesses of the battle,[1] certainly was not of the importance he attaches to it, and in no degree influenced the issue of a skirmish that was unworthy of the genius of this great captain. The truth is that the attack failed because it had been ill conceived and badly executed, and the real or supposed conflict of our troops figured in the bulletin simply in order to palliate a fault which neither Napoleon's pride nor his policy would avow.

The night was passed on both sides in preparations for the battle of the morrow. Every one felt that it must be a decisive one. Never in modern times had so large a number of men been collected on the same spot, for here were nearly three hundred and fifty thousand soldiers preparing to kill each other on the vast plain of the Marchfeld. From early dawn thousands of spectators covered the roofs of the buildings in Vienna, little more than a league distant from the scene of action, anxiously awaiting the issue of the combat which was to decide their fate.

Meantime Napoleon had consolidated his army more than on the previous day. He left Bernadotte in his advanced position at Aderklaa, but took care to reinforce Masséna's corps, at the same time placing it on his left in the second line, while he confided the charge of Aspern to the Boudet division. His other corps took up their positions from Aderklaa to Grosshofen, opposite the Wagram plateau, and even Davout, though on our extreme right,

[1] Not even by Gersdorf, who wrote with the view of justifying the Saxons. I may add that good military judges, like Jomini, pass it over in silence. So do Marmont, Savary, etc., all present at the battle. General Pelet mentions it doubtingly and without attaching any importance to it.

received instructions to draw nearer to this point. The Emperor, rendered more circumspect, it would seem, by the check of the day before, had resolved to await a move on the enemy's side before definitely deciding on his plan of action, whilst the archduke, influenced by an opposite feeling, determined this time to act on the offensive. Thus it may be said that both had changed places, the one being as little inclined by nature to wait for his adversary's initiative as the other was to precede him. The archduke had ordered a general attack along his whole line, but he wished it to be begun by the right wing, which was by far the strongest. Commanded by Klenau and Kollowrath, it was to advance from Süssenbrun and Kagran in the direction of Aspern, and, by threatening our bridges over the Danube, create alarm in our rear. The other Austrian corps then, taking advantage of the confusion that would ensue, might, in their turn, attack us with greater effect.

The order of battle adopted by the archduke, though very advantageous in regard to the effect of his fire, had the defect of making the communications difficult. The great distance between the Austrian head-quarters and the farthest *corps d'armée* was in itself the cause of his instructions always arriving too late. By an inversion damaging to the Austrians, the archduke's left wing was the first to attack, instead of the right, as he had intended. Rosenberg, who commanded it, descended from the heights of Neusiedel, crossed the Russbach, and at about four o'clock in the morning came into collision with Davout's corps which was terminating its part of the concentric move between Grosshofen and Glinzendorf. The Emperor, astonished at this eccentric and vigorous attack, rushed in person to the support of Davout's four divisions with eight regiments of heavy cavalry and one battery of eight guns which opened on the flank of Rosenberg's corps, and the Austrians finding their manœuvre of no avail except as a diversion, being thus cut short, recrossed the Russbach, lost the ground they had gained, and took up their old positon at Neusiedel.

Meanwhile our left was engaged on its side, but with less success. Bernadotte, who in some sort formed its

advanced point at Aderklaa in the middle of the semicircle formed by the Austrian positions, seeing himself isolated, badly supported, and surrounded by enemies, fell back towards Masséna, after having evacuated the village, which was instantly occupied by Bellegarde. Uniting their forces, the two marshals returned together to Aderklaa, whence, by means of a combined attack, they succeeded in driving out the enemy. Archduke Charles, however, rushed forward with his reserve to Bellegarde's aid, and, impetuously penetrating into Aderklaa, forced Bernadotte slowly to retire before him, while Masséna, on the other hand, was called back to Süssenbrun by Kollowrath and Klenau, who, also beginning to move forward, advanced upon his flanks. Still suffering from the effects of a fall from his horse, Masséna traversed the field of battle in a carriage, and with his customary intrepidity rendered all the more striking by his weakness, he showed himself at every point which was most threatened. Never did he seem grander in the face of danger, and never was his glorious name greeted with more enthusiastic acclamations. But his *corps d'armée* could not withstand the almost twofold strength of Klenau and Kollowrath. Falling back upon Aspern it joined the Boudet division, but was soon driven still farther and forced to retreat beyond Essling, which was then speedily occupied by the enemy.

Thus, towards nine o'clock in the morning, we had victoriously repulsed Rosenberg's attack on our right, but our left was wellnigh completely routed. It had lost nearly two leagues of ground, and the Austrians creeping on between us and the Danube were on the point of taking us in reverse and seizing our bridges. The formidable mass in our centre, however, was still intact and had not even been engaged, although it might have been previously turned to good account. In that point were gathered the several corps of Prince Eugène, Marmont, Oudinot, and the Bavarians, with the guard and the immense reserves of artillery and cavalry. The surprising inactivity of such imposing forces, whilst our centre was being crushed, can only be explained by the Emperor's fatigue, by the obstacles

arising from the long distances, and by the difficulty of setting such enormous masses in motion; for Napoleon had been perceptibly below his usual standard in the late engagements, especially in the skirmish of the previous evening, either from the fact that his genius, which was so eminently made for taking the offensive, had been more or less stunned by an attack of such unexpected proportions, or that he had for the moment exhausted the resources of his intellect in the marvellous operation of crossing the Danube.

However that may have been, the fault committed was not irreparable, and he instantly took every means to insure us overpowering revenge. Masséna, to whom he despatched reinforcements, was desired to occupy himself solely in holding the archduke's right at bay, while the chief bulk of our army was throwing itself on the unsupported Austrian centre, with all that vigour and impulse which on their part had hitherto been restrained. Davout, meanwhile, was to take advantage of this great offensive movement to turn the Russbach, and thus overcome that obstacle before attacking it in front with Oudinot. In order to prepare the way for the advance by our centre, an enormous battery of a hundred guns was brought forward from the reserve, under command of Lauriston and of Drouot, and at once opening a terrific fire, forced back the enemy's line and created fearful havoc in the Austrian ranks. The column of attack commanded by Macdonald then advanced, watched by the rest of the French army, confident of the result. It was followed by the Broussier, Lamarque, and Séras divisions, by a portion of the Guards under Reille's orders, and by the cuirassiers of Nansouty. The Austrians yielded beneath the shock of this irresistible mass of troops, which, overturning everything in their path, pushed forward to Süssenbrun without hastening or slackening their pace, alike calm and intrepid. There, however, they at length stopped, owing to the desperate efforts made by the archduke, by Lichtenstein and Kollowrath. The Austrian commander felt that he must at all hazards arrest our march, if he wished to extricate his right from the false

position in which it had placed itself by advancing too far between our army and the Danube. Despatching it an order to retreat before Masséna, who followed it step by step, he concentrated all his available forces against Macdonald's column, which, now somewhat isolated, was in its turn exposed to a tremendous fire and suffered immense loss. But the arrival of Wrede's Bavarians and of Durutte's divisions quickly filled up the death-gaps in its ranks. Despite this assistance, however, the success of our centre, which at first was so decided, would have continued doubtful and even have been compromised if Davout's attack upon Neusiedel and then on Wagram had not definitely insured our victory.

While Macdonald was performing this march, which has been so justly admired, against the enemy's centre, Davout, with two of his own divisions and Montbrun's cavalry, had crossed the Russbach unseen by the Austrians, and precisely at those points which ought to have been guarded by the Archduke John, had he known how to obey his brother's orders in time. The Russbach being turned by one portion of our troops, the others crossed it in front, and Rosenberg, who occupied Neusiedel, thus found himself attacked in front and flank by Davout's divisions. After a desperate struggle, during which Neusiedel was taken and retaken many times, the village was finally captured, and Davout, driving Rosenberg back on the Blockflies road with two of his divisions, marched with the other two to the plateau at Wagram, where Hohenzollern still stood unassailed. Oudinot, who only waited for this signal, seeing Davout suddenly appear on the heights, now in his turn rushed forward. His first brigades, met by a sharp volley, suffered severely, but he led them back to the assault, penetrated into Baumersdorf, there joining Gudin's division which belonged to the Davout corps, and they advanced together against Wagram. Hohenzollern, overpowered by the onslaught, saw that it was utterly impossible to maintain his ground, and, like Rosenberg, at once effected his retreat. The whole Austrian army soon followed his example. The centre held out

only long enough to allow the right to disengage itself, but as soon as the latter reached Leopoldau in safety, it too fell back in the direction of Wolkersdorf. In fact, from the moment that Archduke John failed to arrive in time to restore its position to the left, the Austrians could no longer sustain the combat with any advantage.

It was not more than two o'clock in the afternoon. The Austrians retreated in excellent order, leaving only a few prisoners in our lines, nearly all wounded.[1] It is remarkable, moreover, that our cavalry were several times desired to charge, according to its natural duty at the end of a battle, but, what had never before happened in Napoleon's army, the order was not carried out. Various reasons have been assigned for this singular fact, such as Bessières, who had the chief command of this arm, having been wounded, Lasalle his best general killed, and, finally, the immense confusion of this great melée. But one point must needs be added, namely, that the Austrian retreat was covered by fearfully destructive artillery. Six or seven hundred guns had been thundering on both sides during the day and the Austrians had left but few upon the field of battle. On the other hand their loss in killed and wounded amounted to nearly twenty-five thousand men, while ours, although Napoleon in his bulletin calculated it at *fifteen hundred killed and three or four thousand wounded*, was at least as great.[2] The pursuit by our cavalry was so languidly carried out that even on the next day, 7th July, our head-quarters had no precise information as to the enemy's line of retreat, some supposing that he had fallen back on Moravia, others affirming that he had gone to Bohemia.

[1] According to the very concise bulletin of Archduke Charles, they took from us six thousand prisoners, including three generals.

[2] It amounted in reality to twenty-seven thousand killed or wounded. This difference is explained by the disposal of the two armies. Ours being concentrated, whilst the Austrian line was of unlimited extent, its fire necessarily took more effect. Oudinot's corps alone, according to that marshal's report, lost eight thousand nine hundred and forty-six men, and the Séras division alone suffered so severely that it had to be disbanded after the battle (*Mémoires* of Prince Eugène).

Towards evening, when all was over, scouts from Archduke John's army were seen hovering in the neighbourhood of Leopoldsdorf, and the apparition caused an indescribable panic amongst the victors. The Austrians, however, unfortunately for them, were not on the spot to take advantage of the confusion, and our soldiers quickly recovered from their false alarm. But the sad episode definitively proved to the most short-sighted that, however much our troops might have increased in number during the last few years, they had perceptibly deteriorated in quality. Wagram was still a victory, it is true, but a victory without prestige, and almost without result, especially if compared with those that had preceded it. Such was the effect, regarding it from a strictly military point of view, of the conscriptions by anticipation, the arbitrary amalgamation of twenty different nationalities in a combat against their own cause, of the deploying of colossal masses in which matter trampled on mind, of the passive servility of commanders, and the blind idolatry of the soldiers, and lastly, of an authority so jealously guarded by the master and of his overweening confidence in his own infallibility. These elements of degeneracy now inherent in the *Grande Armée* were far from having as yet produced all their consequences, but they had already considerably weakened its unity, discipline, force of cohesion, and resources of a purely moral nature, such as self-abnegation, constancy, and that combination of disinterestedness, sacrifice, and patriotism, which is called military virtue. Great individual courage still existed amongst our soldiers, no doubt, and, at certain moments, even heroic impulse. Of this they had given a thousand proofs at Wagram, but they no longer possessed that equable and sustained ardour which can animate and support an army, and carry it along, independent of its commander. A most characteristic proof of this is to be found in one of Napoleon's orders. Wishing to prevent the numberless desertions which took place during the combat, under pretext of carrying the wounded to the ambulances, he commanded that all the wounded, who were incapable of retiring by themselves, should be left on the field until the

end of the action. He afterwards defended himself for having given this inhuman order, and, according to his custom, accused of calumny those writers who had noted the fact; but in his *Correspondence* the draft of a proclamation may be read—in his own handwriting from beginning to end—in which the following words occur: 'It is forbidden, *in the name of honour*, to leave the battlefield for the purpose of helping the wounded, while the battle is raging.' As I mention the circumstance simply for its deep significance, and not with the object, more or less superfluous, of merely accusing Napoleon of insensibility, it matters little whether he published the prohibition or not; it is quite sufficient that he should have thought of doing so. That in itself was a novel and sinister fact. It was a measure which had never been found necessary either under the Republic or the Consulate, for no one would have thought of issuing such an order to an army fighting for its mother-country or for liberty; nay more, not even to soldiers fighting for mere glory.[1]

But the Emperor's genius, although occasionally and temporarily obscured by his increasing infatuation, was still powerful enough to supply every need. Nor was it merely by the force and fertility of his ideas that he had vanquished his adversary; it was far more by his strength of will, his foresight, the superiority of his efforts and of his calculations, and by the miracles wrought by his astounding activity; for, although it be undoubtedly true that moral force triumphs in the long run, it is equally true that moral force does not alone consist in the justice of a cause. Strict rights and those generous passions which they engender are of no avail, unless also accompanied by that intellect, energy, perseverance, constant study, and fearless action, which alone form great captains, strong nations, and invincible armies.

[1] See for Wagram—the letters and bulletins of Napoleon; Archduke Charles's bulletin; the reports of Macdonald, Marmont, Bernadotte, Oudinot, and Boudet; the *Correspondance* of Prince Eugène; the *Mémoires* of Masséna, edited from his papers by General Koch; the *Mémoires* of Marmont; *Mémoires sur la guerre de* 1809 by General Pelet; *Mémoires* of Grouchy; *Mémoires* of Savary; and the narratives by the political and military historians, Jomini, Thiers, etc.

In this respect Archduke Charles, though he displayed the rarest qualities on the day of battle, utterly failed to show them on its eve or morrow, and, like Napoleon's other adversaries, had still much to learn from his fortunate conqueror.

A few days after the battle of Wagram the archduke gave a fresh and most striking proof of that indecision which paralysed his great military talents. Our army was continuing its uncertain and scattered pursuit of the Austrians along three different routes. Masséna was advancing by Hollabrunn, Marmont by Laa to Znaïm, and Davout towards Nikolsburg, Napoleon meantime remaining behind at Wolkersdorf with Oudinot and the reserves, while the army of Italy covered Vienna with the Saxons and the Würtembergers. Marmont was desired to combine his operations with those of Davout who had been the first to take the route he now followed. Accustomed, however, to act alone in his little empire of Dalmatia, and impatient to distinguish himself, Marmont made no efforts to obey this order, although he was perfectly aware that the Austrians had retreated to Bohemia and not to Moravia. In fact, the archduke was that moment at Znaïm, where, with an army as fully concentrated as ours was scattered, he occupied the strong positions afforded by the gradually rising heights around that town.

On the 10th July Marmont, in the most thoughtless manner, found himself with very inferior numbers suddenly in the midst of the Austrian forces. The two nearest of our *corps d'armée*—those of Davout and of Masséna—were at least two marches distant from him, and even Napoleon, behind them, did not show his habitual vigilance. He was still intoxicated by his victory, and considered Austria annihilated. In a letter to Clarke he writes: 'I have established my head-quarters in the house that was occupied by that *wretched Francis II.* . . . I fired a hundred thousand bullets at them!' The archduke might have made us pay dearly for such temerity. Marmont's and Masséna's two corps, especially, were so compromised that it would have been easy to crush them one after the other,

but he did not know how to take advantage of this unexpected good luck.

Marmont was the first to perceive the danger of his position. Showing a bold front in order to make the enemy believe he was supported, instead of retreating, he attacked the defences of Znaïm with a temerity that would have been madness if it had not been done by design. It is true he did not succeed in taking them, but he held his positions until nightfall, and in this manner the archduke lost one of the finest opportunities of revenge which fortune had offered this over-cautious genius during the whole course of the campaign. On the following day, the 11th of July, the combat was commencing, under conditions far more favourable to us—Masséna, moreover, had meanwhile come to our rescue—when news arrived that an armistice had been signed between the two armies, and the fighting at once ended (July 11, 1802).

CHAPTER IV

CAMPAIGN IN PORTUGAL, 1809—SOULT DRIVEN FROM PORTUGAL BY WELLINGTON

(*January–May* 1809)

THE armistice of Znaïm did not, and could not, produce peace. Austria in fact was far from being definitively vanquished. Not only had she inflicted heavy losses on us at an immense distance from our frontiers, but, for the first time since Napoleon had been her adversary, she had of late more than once made his victories doubtful. She had disputed the ground from Abensberg to Wagram with unheard-of tenacity, and for a moment had even made Napoleon's star pale at Essling. These successes, though negative, were the more striking from being at the end of a long series of disastrous wars, each of which had cost her a portion of her territory, while the forces of her enemy had gone on increasing in an inverse ratio. Despite so many affronts and so much dismemberment, Austria seemed stronger than at the beginning of this long struggle; Napoleon, on the contrary, notwithstanding his numberless conquests and his aggrandisement, struck with less certainty, and appeared to have lost rather than gained by the indefinite extension of his empire. One might have said that his superiority—pre-eminently the moral superiority of genius and of discipline, and the primary cause of his triumphs, as it was the sole guarantee of lasting victory—was about to pass from his camp to that of his adversaries, above all, since he had begun to rely on the number and bulk of his armies. Austria consequently had risen in her

own estimation and in that of Europe, while she also still possessed enormous resources. Instigated by Stadion, whose hatred was unconquerable, the war party was in nowise disheartened. The retreat of the Austrian army to Bohemia after the battle of Wagram was, no doubt, a strategic fault, and for every reason it would have been wiser to withdraw to Hungary. But that same army was still a solid compact force, backed by many very strong places; and diversions, dangerous to us, could be calculated upon. The corps of Giulay and Chastelar, for instance, had re-formed in our rear, menacing our communications in a line that extended from Leoben nearly to Trieste, while the Tyrolese insurrection was acquiring alarming proportions. With such means of resistance at her disposal, Austria could not look upon her cause as lost. Moreover, she had legitimate ground for hope in the two great warlike operations on which the eyes of the whole world were then fixed, that of Sir Arthur Wellesley in Spain, and the British expedition to Holland.

The court of Austria hoped, not without apparent reason, that, even supposing these two enterprises should prove but partially successful, they would sooner or later place Napoleon in a most critical position, and force him to retrograde, or, at the very least, to weaken his army, in order to support his empire in whatever point it were most menaced. Hence, it was important to wait for that moment before renewing hostilities. The time should meanwhile be passed in active preparation by strengthening the army, improving its position, and making Hungary its basis of support instead of Bohemia. Time seemed to promise every advantage to our adversaries, and Napoleon, notwithstanding the somewhat artificial lustre which he had shed upon his victory, must have keenly felt the real instability of his situation and the exhaustion of his troops, otherwise he would never have consented to grant his enemies a respite, instead of thoroughly defeating them according to his usual method. Thus actuated by different but equally plausible motives, both sides, on the pretext of negotiating, determined to wait until the issue of the

contest already begun in the Tagus valley, and on the eve of beginning on the shores of Holland, should have given a decided turn to events.

Affairs in Spain had fallen back into an uncertain, precarious, and tottering condition ever since Napoleon had quitted that country to make his preparations for war against Austria, at the end of January 1809. His short and brilliant campaign against the Spanish insurrection had been more showy than productive of real results. The valour of his old legions of Austerlitz and Jena, the numerical superiority of his troops, whose effective strength at one time amounted to four hundred thousand men, the temporary concentration of his resources within somewhat restricted limits, the unity which the operations derived from his actual presence, had enabled him easily to disperse armies possessing neither discipline nor organisation. But he had in nowise destroyed them; nor had he definitively established himself anywhere; and the efficient, though hopeless diversion, which Sir John Moore caused in the north of the Peninsula, had made a failure of the theatrical effect by which he had intended to intimidate his enemies and impress their imaginations. In the failure of this grand stage-effect lay the contradiction which events gave to his proud promise that he would 'plant his victorious eagles on the ramparts of Lisbon.'

To be obliged to return to France without having performed this promise, and without having kept an engagement entered into before all Europe, was for him relatively a real check. But it was not his pride alone that was wounded by it. The conquest of Portugal was not only a means of acting on opinion and of impressing the public mind; it was quite as much a true strategic necessity. So long as Portugal was not subdued, so long as revolt was maintained in a country which for a hundred and fifty leagues bordered such important provinces of Spain as Andalusia, Estremadura, the kingdom of Leon and Galicia, our rule in the Peninsula could be but nominal. For this reason it was that Napoleon took especial care before starting for Paris to draw up a detailed plan for that very

conquest which he had been unable personally to achieve, and confided its execution to Marshal Soult, one of his most able lieutenants.

According to this plan, dictated at Valladolid, and dated January 1, 1809, Marshal Soult (whom we left with Ney before Corunna, where the English had just effected their retreat) was, after taking that place, to march with four divisions upon Oporto, and then upon Lisbon by the most direct route, that leading by Tuy and Braga. His communications were to be covered by Ney's corps, which was to remain in Galicia. By the Emperor's calculations, Soult could reach Oporto on the 5th of February, and Lisbon on the 15th. At the same moment that he would begin to threaten the capital, Marshal Victor's *corps d'armée*, then encamped in the Tagus valley, was to pass by a side movement into the valley of the Guadiana and advance to Merida, ready to support Soult if necessary, or, if this were not required, then to march on Andalusia, the conquest of which he was to undertake and accomplish.[1] All our operations in the Peninsula were subordinated to Soult's success in Portugal, excepting those of St. Cyr in Catalonia, which was a kind of intrenched camp, where that general acted as he pleased, and could freely indulge his love of independent command. Until Soult could achieve the task confided to him by the Emperor, every other plan for the subjection of Spain was to be postponed. All our other *corps d'armée* were to limit themselves to the occupation of the positions we already held. To Soult alone belonged the initiative and the honour of assuming the offensive, whilst Joseph, with Jourdan as chief of the staff, and a *corps d'armée* composed of the Sebastiani and Desolle divisions, with the reserve, was to hold Madrid and New Castile, Mortier and Suchet to occupy Aragon, Ney Galicia, and Victor our advanced positions on the Tagus. Lapisse remained at Salamanca, Kellerman at Valladolid, Bonnet in Biscay, while a host of other detachments guarded our communications between Madrid and the Pyrenees.

[1] Berthier to Soult, January 1, 1809.

According to the most trustworthy calculations these scattered corps constituted a force of not less than 300,000 men, even after taking into account the removal of large numbers by Napoleon to the army of the Danube. But the difference which exists between the nominal and the effective strength of an army, at all times considerable, assumed proportions in Spain unknown elsewhere, and formed one of the most characteristic features of this lamentable war. The number of non-available men—such, for instance, as the non-combatants, the sick, stragglers, or others belonging to no special class, those employed in the transport service, in communications, detachments, etc.—who usually averaged one-sixth of the whole, in Spain amounted to nearly one-half of the total effective force. In this way Soult, who was supposed to have forty-seven thousand men under his orders, in reality had not more than twenty-five thousand combatants, while Ney, instead of thirty-five had only seventeen thousand. Nor was the spirit of the troops any longer what it had been. Obliged to pillage without mercy in order to live, and forced to protect themselves against a warfare of surprises and ambuscades by fearful reprisals, they were still further demoralised by the rivalries, jealousies, and open distrust which in Napoleon's absence arose amongst the generals, dividing the command and lowering their authority. The troops complained that they were sacrificed in an unprofitable enterprise, full of danger yet inglorious, and where their valour, out of their master's sight, would win none of the rewards reserved for their more fortunate companions.

The latter grievance, far from being confined to the army, was shared by all the functionaries and officials of the kingdom, beginning at the very highest, King Joseph himself. The harsh law of living upon the conquered country and expecting nothing from France, which Napoleon imposed upon his troops, weighed even more heavily on the civil functionaries, who were expected to show more consideration and to observe some outward appearance of legality. Nevertheless, they could not, any more than the army, hope

for either pay or recompense in this place of exile, and, in order to live, they were reduced to the most miserable expedients. King Joseph in particular felt the necessity all the more keenly that he was more deeply attached than ever to his favourite chimera of gaining the hearts of the Spaniards by gentleness. From the very morrow of Napoleon's departure for Paris we see this poor king pursuing his brother with lamentations, in the hope of obtaining some help whereby to console his subjects, to pay his officials, and to stop, if only partially, the universal system of spoliation: 'I have not a penny to give any one,' wrote Joseph. 'I see my guards still wearing the same coats I gave them four years ago. All my servants are still billeted on the town. . . . What can I do without contributions, capital, or money?[1] Every Spaniard would be at my feet if they only knew my kind feelings.'[2] Napoleon, with the view of getting immediate resources, had confiscated the estates of the ten wealthiest families in the kingdom, but had reserved to himself the right of disposing of the confiscated property. Joseph, under the pressure of his immediate necessities, had been induced to extend the sequestration to double that number. A descent of this kind is slippery, and, as a moralist of the day observed, when confiscation is adopted as a punishment it always ends in punishment being resorted to in order to confiscate. But Fréville, who had been appointed administrator of the estates sequestered by Napoleon, fancied he was equally authorised to lay his hand on those seized by Joseph, which gave rise to deplorable scenes, ill calculated to raise, in the eyes of the Spanish nation, that government which was ordered to regenerate it. 'M. de Fréville has taken the liberty of sending by night and carrying off the keys of the houses I have placed under sequestration, and he has desired the superintendent of the *émigrés* not to obey my agents. It is the talk of the town to-day. I have ordered M. de Fréville, who seems to me to be out of his mind, to give back the keys of the houses to the administrators of

[1] Correspondence of King Joseph, Feb. 19, 1809.
[2] *Ibid.*, March 7, 1809.

the estates. . . . M. de Fréville does not recognise my authority; and is no doubt ill.' [1]

The proceeds realised by the confiscations, the sale of wool seized in certain towns, the city tolls of Madrid, the melting of what Joseph naïvely called his *plate*, namely, masterpieces of the goldsmith's and silversmith's art which had formed a portion of the heirlooms inherited by the kings of Spain; these were the only resources upon which the treasury could calculate; and the only means of influencing his brother which Joseph possessed was by perpetually threatening to abdicate; at the same time, he never carried the threat into effect. In reality, Joseph loved power, not so much for the power itself as for the satisfaction it afforded his vanity; and, though his threats of abdication, and retiring to Mortfontaine, were not always feigned, he never failed to repent of them speedily, invariably disappointing many of his friends who, wishing to extricate themselves from difficulties, had been simple enough to rely on his energy and resolution.[2] Hence his complaints were ineffective, and this advocate of kindness and gentleness was always forced in the end to become the minister of a merciless policy. The absolute opposition existing between his views and those of Napoleon with regard to the system that ought to be pursued in Spain was in itself an abiding source of weakness; for, if a policy based on clemency was as idle an Utopia as one founded on severity, it was at least necessary to know how to choose one or the other, and the worst of all was to have no system whatever. Owing to the never-ceasing fluctuations, clemency ended by seeming to be nothing but weakness, while severity resembled cruelty.

This lamentable discordance on the question of general policy was further complicated by a much graver discordance as to the military operations. According to all the official declarations, Joseph was still supposed, under Napoleon's superintendence, to keep the chief direction of the war in his hands. No system could be more ill judged, as the

[1] Correspondence of King Joseph, March 19, 1809.
[2] Miot de Melito; Roederer.

sad events at Baylen had already proved. Moreover, Joseph was far from being capable of such a lieutenancy. Still, if he were to act under the advice of Marshal Jourdan, a judicious, experienced, and wise counsellor, and of Desolle, formerly chief of the staff under Moreau, a good officer whom Joseph had honourably rescued from his long disgrace, it might have been possible to remedy at least some of the drawbacks incidental to the direction of the war from such a distance. Unfortunately however Napoleon had no idea of the kind. He reposed, justly it is true, no confidence in Joseph's military talents, but he also affected, most unjustly, to despise Marshal Jourdan's. Two sentiments influenced him on this occasion : one of rancour against the honourable attachment which the general had preserved for his old republican opinions, and the other, a violent antipathy against all those whose judgment was not dazzled by the grandeur of the new *régime*. Blind hatred was less obnoxious to him than a discreet and rational opposition, for he knew that passionate temperaments easily veer from one extreme to another, while reflecting minds preserve their consistency equally under blame or praise. What he could not submit to was the sensation of being criticised. The authority which he had left to Joseph and Jourdan was, consequently, purely nominal,—barely what was considered essential to the prestige of so feeble a royalty. Every chief of a corps was instructed to correspond directly with his Minister Clarke, who alone was authorised to give them orders ; an instruction which they faithfully obeyed, especially as it favoured their taste for independence, and was also most flattering to their vanity.

Conflicts without number at once arose between the different marshals—each of whom, in the pride of his recent emancipation, was anxious to act alone, and was jealous, to an extreme, of his prerogatives,—and at the same time with the court of Madrid, on the other hand, which persisted in not understanding that its military supremacy was simply a form of etiquette, or at most a consulting power, a mere species of registry-office. Hence the commanders of corps had to await their instructions from

Paris, which required at least a fortnight, and often two months, for transmission. It then became necessary to protect such instructions against Joseph and his counsellors, or, at the very least, to try to make them agree with the orders received from Madrid; for, in spite of every drawback, a certain deference had to be observed towards the brother of the Emperor. It were useless to insist on the contradictions and the impracticability inherent in such a plan; but the incredible part consists in the fact that the principal author of the system, he who maintained it in defiance of representations made by every man of sense, complained, when writing to Joseph, that affairs in Spain lacked 'a central and instantaneous impetus!'

How could this most necessary impetus be central, when each marshal considered himself an independent chief acting on his own responsibility, or received orders that were either tardy or contradictory, according as they were issued from Paris or Madrid? How could it be instantaneous, when these same orders, transmitted to him by slow and uncertain means, only reached him after events had so modified his position that they became perfectly inapplicable? As Joseph with much good sense remarked, Napoleon's instructions ought to have been simply 'general directions which could have been modified according to changes that might have taken place in Spanish affairs after the instructions had been sent from Paris,' and they ought to have been addressed to 'Marshal Jourdan alone, so that the army should know that they bore the impress of headquarters in Spain.'[1] Under this condition alone could an impetus become central and instantaneous; a matter, in fact, of such dire necessity, that the most inadequate generalship within reach of passing events would have been a thousand times preferable to such distant and incoherent guidance.

Besides these causes of failure, which though then latent were to burst forth with irresistible force when our armies began to act, we must note the incurable illusions fostered

[1] Correspondence of King Joseph. Joseph to Napoleon, April 19, 1809.

by Napoleon and even by Joseph as to the facility of the enterprise. Napoleon, for instance, made Berthier write to Ney at the very outset of the campaign, that, 'if he could not employ his battalions in hindering the English communicating with the shore, *he must make the inhabitants of the country undertake that task.*'[1] Here was the continuation of a persistent error; the same which, a short time previously, had induced him to contemplate the creation of a national guard in Catalonia for the purpose of suppressing the insurrection. About the same period, Joseph wrote to his brother that Romana earnestly desired to make his submission and was only deterred through fear of not '*obtaining his pardon!*'[2] Nor are these the only traits of the kind. Optimism of this description, which seems puerile to us who know what our situation then was, proves what a prodigious distance separated these two minds from the reality of passing events.

Such serious mistakes naturally exercised a fatal influence on the conduct of the military operations. Marshal Soult, who, according to the Imperial instructions of the 1st of January, was to have been at Oporto on the 5th of February, and at Lisbon on the 15th, had, on the last-named date, reached no farther than the Minho,—the river which forms the boundary between Galicia and Portugal. His army, reduced to the effective strength of twenty-five or twenty-six thousand men, had, it is true, been reorganised at St. Jago de Compostella, but it had scarcely yet recovered from the fatigues and privations endured in its pursuit of Sir John Moore. Still, although it had been thus forcibly delayed, our entry into Portugal took place under the most favourable conditions possible. Owing to the return of Moore's army to England, the only obstacles in our path arose from the difficulty of the roads in winter, from Romana's scattered bands, which, however, merely harassed our left on the side of Ribadavia, and from the revolutionary forces of Portugal itself, not very formidable to veteran troops like those of Soult. An English corps no doubt

[1] Berthier to Ney, February 18, 1809.
[2] Joseph to Napoleon, March 28, 1809.

remained at Lisbon, one which Moore had left there under Sir John Cradock, but it was an inconsiderable detachment, and moreover, could not quit the capital, having to protect it from any attack through the valley of the Tagus.

Convinced of the necessity of taking advantage of these circumstances, Soult, in order to surprise and disconcert the enemy by a rapid march, opened the campaign by first appearing on the Minho. Unfortunately that river was swollen to an unusual degree by the winter rains, all the means of passage were destroyed, and the attempts of our troops to cross it at Campo Sancos, near its mouth, failed, though not without causing us considerable loss. Instead of wasting precious time, however, in an ill-timed struggle against nature, Soult at once modified his plans. Leaving the greatest portion of his war-material at Tuy, he re-ascended the Minho to Orense, continuously fighting the skirmishers from Romana's bands, who disputed the ground inch by inch on his route. At Orense he at length succeeded in crossing the river, and, after having repulsed but not destroyed Romana, he plunged into the difficult region of Tras-os-Montes,—that mountainous district of which the principal defiles lead into the valley of the Douro. The Marquis de la Romana, being discontented with his Portuguese allies after having fought some battles in their company, barely passed the frontier which separates the two countries, when he withdrew into Spain, turning upon our rear in the valley of the Syl. Soult has been reproached with having allowed him to escape; but if he had pursued an adversary who was so difficult to catch in such a country, and had not moved on until he destroyed him, it is pretty certain that he never could have entered Portugal.

However this might have been, the marshal was not able to appear before Chaves,—the first Portuguese town he met with on the frontier,—until the 10th of March 1809. The Portuguese forces, after Romana's retreat, barely counted eight or ten thousand men. They were commanded by General Sylveira, and composed, as elsewhere, of some regular troops, of the militia, and of peasants. This was the first line of defence. Then came a second

army of about twenty-five thousand men collected at Braga, under the orders of Bernardin Freire and Eben; and lastly, a much larger gathering at Oporto, commanded by the Bishop of that town. True, these were multitudes rather than armies, but multitudes worked up to the highest pitch of excitement and displaying an enthusiasm almost unexampled even in the war in Spain.

On this, as on every occasion when the civil, political or military authority falls under the influence of popular passion, the wildest decisions were those which found most favour, especially when coloured by patriotic sentiments. Chaves was an untenable position, and the generals determined not to attempt to hold it, preferring to reserve their forces for the guerilla warfare of surprises and ambuscades which had proved so injurious to us. But the populace, instigated by their leaders, obliged Sylveira to leave a detachment of three thousand men in the town, which resulted, as might have been foreseen, in useless destruction and an inevitable capitulation after a resistance of three days (March 13). From Chaves, Soult marched straight to Braga, where the same scenes took place, accompanied this time, as invariably happens in the end, by murder. Bernardin Freire, seeing that Braga was as difficult a position to defend as Chaves, determined to spare the town the horrors of a storm, and to save the Portuguese cause from the results of a defeat. Consequently, he ordered his militia to evacuate Braga, but they mutinied and killed him, almost in sight of our advance-guard commanded by Franceschi.[1] A few hours later they also massacred his aide-de-camp, Villaboas, and next day about twenty prisoners, whom Soult had sent back with proposals of peace. But ferocity instead of stimulating courage always lessens it, and acts of this description were not calculated to imbue troops with strength and calm steadiness, in the absence of which an army can only be a confused, floating, powerless mass. Hence it is easy to understand that the positions occupied by the Portuguese on Mount Adaufe outside Braga, being attacked by us at

[1] Report of General Eben to Sir John Cradock.

nine in the morning, were in our possession at ten o'clock. The fugitives dispersed in all directions, pursued by our cavalry, who sabred them mercilessly, in revenge for the cruelties committed on their comrades, and the regular troops alone opposed us, though but feebly, at Ponte-Ponto and at Falperra.[1]

Soult left the Heudelet division at Braga, and then endeavoured to reassure the inhabitants and entice them back to the town by acts of clemency and humanity. Having rested his troops and taken advantage of the large resources which the possession of Braga placed at his disposal, he resumed his march on Oporto. His army, however, had been considerably reduced by the detachments left at Braga, Chaves, and Tuy, and by the constant fighting, which, though never formidable, had been of daily occurrence. The scenes of confusion which had taken place at Braga were but trifling compared to the immense disorder that reigned at Oporto. There the Bishop had been entrusted with the supreme command, and it was he who directed the military operations. The whole population had taken up arms, and displayed extraordinary ardour, but no judgment, in raising a line of fortifications above Oporto extending from the Douro to the sea. Although mounted with two hundred guns, they possessed at no point the requisite solidity. As always happens under such circumstances, the people accused those of treason whose clear-sightedness pointed out the dangers of the undertaking, and, with the first news of the misfortunes at Braga, they massacred some twenty of the most enlightened citizens of Oporto, dragging their bodies through the streets. Showing less cruelty however towards strangers than towards their own fellow-countrymen, they spared General Foy, who had been surprised while making a reconnaissance in the neighbourhood.

Soult arrived before the place on the 27th of March. He summoned it to surrender by a letter addressed to the Bishop, in which he represented the uselessness of resist-

[1] *Mémoires sur les Opérations militaires en Galice et en Portugal*, by Lenoble. *History of the Peninsular War:* Napier.

ance and the inevitable disasters of a combat in the streets of so rich and populous a city. But all in vain. On the 29th, therefore, he sent his columns to assault the town, and the simplest manœuvres were sufficient to remove every obstacle. He divided his army into three corps: the two wings were to make feint attacks on the two extreme points of the extended line of defence, while the centre was to force its way into the town. Merle, who on the previous day had occupied a portion of the intrenchments raised by the Portuguese on the left of Oporto, vigorously renewed his attack, thereby drawing their forces off to that side, while Delaborde and Franceschi threw themselves impetuously on the right. Instantly, a mass of men, numbering from forty to fifty thousand, might be seen rushing from right to left, and left to right, in the utmost confusion, leaving the centre totally unprotected. This was exactly what had been anticipated. Mermet at once advanced with his columns, and, overthrowing every obstacle in his path, penetrated into the town, making straight for the bridge of boats on the Douro, the only retreat open to the fugitives he was driving before him. Thither, in fearful disorder, a maddened crowd of women, children, and soldiers of every arm pressed forward, exposed on one side to our bayonets, and on the other to the fire of the Portuguese guns, which were thundering from the opposite bank in the hope of driving us from the bridge. The boats soon sank beneath the weight of the advancing crowd, the bridge broke, and the unfortunate fugitives were precipitated into the river. Overpowered by this horrible scene, our soldiers stopped for a moment in order to help the victims, then quickly repaired the bridge, and rushing forward, carried the positions on the left bank. Meantime the combat was going on in the town, but when its defenders at length perceived the folly of further resistance, it was too late to control the fury of our soldiers. The fight became a massacre, and Oporto was given up to pillage, devastation, and all those excesses in which an army indulges when once it has lost respect for discipline, and is no more than a military mob. The Bishop of

Oporto had insured his safety the day before by passing over to the left bank of the Douro.[1]

Marshal Soult was obliged to stop at Oporto to rest his troops, to wait for his war-material which had been left at Tuy, and to restore, if possible, his communications with Galicia. Oporto, which is the most important town in Portugal after Lisbon, possessed immense resources of every kind. The Douro afforded us an almost impassable line of defence against any attack from the South. It was possible, therefore, to obtain a firm footing at Oporto, but still, this was far from realising the programme laid down by Napoleon! Though the beginning of April was close at hand, scarcely a quarter of the distance between Lisbon and Galicia had been passed. Not even a tenth of this much-coveted kingdom had been conquered, and if we were not reduced to stand on the defensive, we were at least forced into inaction. Soult, nevertheless, had hitherto done everything that circumstances had permitted him, and there was nothing to reproach him with. The only culprit was he who persisted in denying the existence of the obstacles that thwarted his fancies. In Portugal, as in Spain, the insurrection rose up again like a living barrier in the rear of our soldiers the moment they had made, at the cost of blood, an opening for their passage. In order to retake the ground occupied the day before, it would have been necessary to turn back incessantly. No sooner had we quitted Tuy, where our principal depôt was situated, than Romana's bands, momentarily dispersed, reappeared to invest it. The evil was even greater at Chaves, for Sylveira, whom we had there defeated, immediately captured our garrison with all our sick. Lorge and Heudelet arrived in time, it is true, to relieve Tuy, but Loison never even attempted to retake Chaves, and, after a little skirmishing, had to be satisfied with posting himself at Baltar, on the lower range of the Tras-os-Montes.

[1] According to an eye-witness, who wrote almost under Soult's dictation, the Portuguese had 8000 men killed at Oporto, while we lost 80. Contrasts of this kind explain our popularity in Portugal (see Lenoble: *Mémoires sur les Opérations militaires en Galice et en Portugal*).

All our other operations in Spain were subjected to delay in consequence of Soult being thus arrested in his progress, so dependent on each other were the links in Napoleon's plan, and the movements of our armies so closely intertwined with success in Portugal. If this expedition were to fail, our operations in Spain would be suspended or paralysed. More than two months had elapsed since any news from Soult had reached Madrid. In fact, no one there had the least idea what had become of him after the 24th of February, and the absence of information was supplied by vain and contradictory conjectures as to his probable movements. Napoleon, on the 13th, supposing him to be close to Lisbon, if not already master of it, urged Joseph to make Victor perform the march that had been agreed upon, to Merida and Andalusia, and Joseph, no less impatient, desired Victor to carry out the Emperor's orders.[1] But our armies in Spain found the same difficulty in advancing that Soult did in Portugal. They were each held at bay by a Spanish corps of almost equal force, and, if they made any attempt to destroy it, would be drawn away from their centre of action. Moreover, they would run the risk of losing sight of their real purpose, that of supporting Soult, or, by leaving the enemy in their rear, would, without any doubt, have their communications broken off.

Victor, in Estremadura, stood against old Gregorio della Cuesta, a general of little talent, but very brave and obstinate. Lapisse was hemmed in at Salamanca by numberless insurgent bands, the chief of which was commanded by Sir Robert Wilson. These two generals, expected to co-operate with Soult, were too much occupied with their own troubles to show much anxiety as to an undertaking the results of which seemed most problematical. Our army of La Mancha, which was to support them at a distance under the orders of Sebastiani, was itself opposed by another Spanish army commanded by Cartoajal, and backed by the Sierra-Morena. However, it had become necessary to act

[1] Napoleon to Joseph, March 13, 1809. Joseph to Napoleon, March 22, 1809.

vigorously on the offensive, if only to preserve liberty of movement. Towards the middle of March, therefore, Victor quitted Talavera to march against Cuesta. Having crossed the Tagus he overthrew Cuesta's outposts at Meza-d'Ibor, pursued him into the valley of the Guadiana, and then defeated him with immense loss at Medelin, on the very day that Soult was entering Oporto (March 28, 1809). At the same time, Sebastiani met Cartoajal at Ciudad-Real, beat him, captured his artillery, and pursued him to the foot of the Sierra-Morena (March 27).

These brilliant successes, however, produced but little effect. Even in the very midst of victory our troops beheld their communications seriously menaced by an enemy that dispersed at one point only to re-form at another.[1] Victor, however, advanced as far as Merida. There, finding it impossible to march on Andalusia or, on the other hand, to reach Portugal, being fettered by instructions which forbade him to attempt any important operation until Soult should have arrived at Lisbon, he reinforced his corps by the Lapisse division, an addition which had become indispensable to him, although Salamanca, a province of great importance to us, was thereby given over to the insurgent party. Having effected this object, he determined to await the turn of events. Historians who have sought to apologise for Soult[2] have strongly reproached Victor for this inactivity. But the orders he had received from Napoleon were formal, and he was not called upon to modify them. If he had been tempted to do so at his own risk and peril, Dupont's fate warned him of the cost of such independence. Moreover, it may be asked what advantage could have been derived from a march to Lisbon, when Soult was still at Oporto? And if Victor's communications with Madrid were difficult enough as it was, what would they have become if he had advanced fifty leagues farther, leaving a fortress like Badajoz in his rear, without mentioning the remnants of Cuesta's army, or the innumerable guerillas that were scouring the country?

[1] Extract from the *Mémoires inédits* of Marshal Jourdan, quoted by M. Thiers.

[2] Napier amongst others.

Had Napoleon been in Spain, or delegated his authority to any one who could have ventured to decide in such a contingency, it is clear that, in view of the prolonged uncertainty as to Soult, some great efforts would have been made to disengage or reinforce him, either by sending Ney from Galicia to Portugal, or by bringing to the Douro a strong detachment of the fourth corps that had remained stationary at Logrono under the orders of Mortier. But Mortier was no more master of his own movements than his colleagues were. When Jourdan asked him to advance at least as far as Valladolid in order to see if he could place himself thence in communication with Soult or Ney, of whom they had also heard nothing for a long time, all that Mortier would venture upon was to establish himself at Burgos, where his presence was of no use to any one.

Ney, happily, required no assistance. Although he had a hundred leagues of coast to defend, he had succeeded in maintaining himself in Galicia. This, however, was by dint of incessant fighting, and by sacrificing his communications with our army in Portugal, which was incompatible with the concentration of his troops, now a primary element of his existence; in short, by disobeying Napoleon. The Emperor had instructed him to fortify himself at Lugo, in the centre of Galicia, as a starting-point whence he could diverge in any direction necessary for the subjugation of the province. Lugo, no doubt, was the *geographical* centre of Galicia, but it was far from being its centre from the point of view of population, riches, influence, or political importance. Corunna united all these conditions, and on that account alone seemed intended as the natural pivot of our occupation, despite its peculiar situation. And, as the danger which chiefly threatened us in Galicia was to be sought, not in the centre but along the seaboard of that province, where we perpetually had to defend ourselves against the landing of the English, it may be said that, even from a strategic point of view, Ney acted very wisely in preferring to station himself at Corunna rather than at Lugo. The month of April 1809 was passed in painful uncertainty. While we were condemned, by our vicious

system of operations rather than by the strength of our adversaries, to so dangerous a state of mere expectancy, an event of incalculable importance was taking place in Portugal; for the conqueror of Vimiero, Sir Arthur Wellesley, landed at Lisbon on the 22d of April. He was received with enthusiasm, and his presence seemed likely to infuse vigour into the Portuguese insurrection, and to give it a totally new direction.

General Sir John Cradock, having considerably diminished his forces by the number of troops and quantity of stores he had sent to Sir John Moore in the preceding campaign, and being moreover neglected, nay, almost abandoned by his own government, had not stirred outside Lisbon during the whole winter of 1809, except to occupy some of the strong defensive positions in its immediate neighbourhood. The British Cabinet was at that time much occupied with a plan for fixing the base of operations for the English army in the Peninsula at Cadiz, instead of at Lisbon. The latter, it is true, had serious drawbacks as a base whence to operate either in the valley of the Tagus or of the Guadiano. An army starting thence would necessarily find itself exposed to attack on its rear or flanks by an enemy occupying Old Castile, the kingdom of Leon, or, in short, any of the Northern Provinces. On the other hand, if it rested on Cadiz, itself an impregnable position, and then operated in La Mancha, leaving the defiles of the Sierra Morena in its rear, it might penetrate into the heart of Spain without having once exposed its flanks to unforeseen attack or in any way endangered its communications.

But the distrust shown by the Spaniards, justified perhaps by the vicinity of Gibraltar, although they were later convinced of their error, had caused the failure of this plan. The detachment sent to occupy Cadiz had been obliged to return to Lisbon (March 12, 1809) without having been allowed to enter the town. Hence the English Government decided on assuming the offensive through Portugal, and despatched several successive reinforcements to Sir John Cradock, which he used with much intelligence and activity in forming and disciplining the levies of the

Portuguese insurrection. Finally, they sent back to Portugal the officers whom they had inconsiderately recalled on account of the Convention of Cintra, and restored his position to the most eminent amongst them, Sir Arthur Wellesley, who was soon to make us at once hate and admire the glorious name of Wellington. Not only did they declare him free from blame, but they raised him to the dignity of Generalissimo, an authority which was also conferred on him by the Regency of Portugal, and of which honour no one in the army proved himself henceforward more worthy.

Wellesley found himself at the head of an army composed of twenty-five thousand English, of from fifteen to twenty thousand Portuguese regular troops, and a militia of insurgents of at least the same amount, but of a very inferior description. Two courses were open to him: to march against Soult or against Victor. In either case he would have to leave Lisbon, if not altogether uncovered, at least much exposed. But Victor was at eighteen days' march from Lisbon, and he could not advance upon that capital without leaving in his rear not only Cuesta's army, which was now reorganised and numbered thirty thousand men, but also the fortresses of Badajoz and Elvas; there was time, consequently, to watch his advance and to hinder his march. Soult, on the contrary, could in four or five days traverse the distance from Oporto to Lisbon without encountering the same obstacles.[1] It was Soult, therefore, that Wellesley determined to strike, in accordance with the plan he had formed the moment he cast a glance at the situation of our armies, namely, from the first hour of his arrival.[2] After having placed Lisbon in a state of defence, posted some corps of observation along the Tagus on the route which Victor would have to take were he to march towards Lisbon, and recommended Cuesta to maintain the defensive until he should himself have beaten Soult, he started for Oporto with an army of twenty-five thousand

[1] Despatches of the Duke of Wellington. Napier, *Peninsular War*.

[2] Despatches to Castlereagh, April 24 and 27, 1809; to Cuesta, April 29; to Frere, April 29; to Mackenzie, May 1.

English and Portuguese, and on the 2d of May 1809 arrived at Coïmbra.

While these threatening preparations were being made, Soult was reposing in perfect security at Oporto, ignorant even of dangers of a totally different nature which menaced him in his own camp, created by his own unskilfulness. Having, after his easily-won victory, been forced to remain at Oporto by the increasing number of the enemy who were assembling in his rear, Soult determined, before advancing farther, to achieve the submission of the conquered country. He waited at Oporto for the arrival of succours, without, however, well knowing whence the succours were to come, as all the other operations were dependent on his entry into Lisbon. Firmly intrenched in his strong positions on the Douro, he accustomed himself to look upon Oporto as a province that had been definitively vanquished, and consequently required organisation, never doubting that it would ultimately lead to the submission of the whole of Portugal. And, as a first step in this direction, he endeavoured to reassure the inhabitants, and induce them to return to their towns, by humane and conciliatory treatment, as well as by the re-establishment of order and discipline in his army.

The peace-loving and wealthier classes, who had been dismayed by such catastrophes as the sack of Oporto, the military executions and the extravagant cruelties of the insurgent mob, listened readily and joyfully to Soult's declarations, and tried to obtain from him every possible guarantee. The inhabitants of the towns, especially the traders, sent him deputations to express their gratitude in the most flattering terms. Vain by nature, and enchanted with such unhoped-for docility in a population which hitherto had only shown us hatred or indomitable fanaticism, Soult easily allowed himself to be deceived, and egregiously mistook the significance of these demonstrations. In what was only the weariness of disorder, regret for lost affluence, and a desire for tranquillity at any cost, he discovered growing sympathies, confidence inspired by his own personal qualities, and even the possibility of

creating a stable and regular order of things in Portugal, by means of a compromise between those who resigned themselves to the existing state of affairs and those who desired absolute independence. And if such a compromise were possible,—as facts seemed to indicate,—why should it not be carried out in the name and for the advantage of him who had originated and prepared it? Why should not Soult himself become the guarantee and the chief representative of such a reconciliation between the great Empire and a people who had hitherto been so hostile to it? Would not this simply be a return to the much-vaunted system of royal vassals? Were not Soult's services quite as brilliant as those of Murat, or of as much value as those chance titles which the ill-sustained honour of a privileged parentage had bestowed on Joseph, Jerome, and Louis?

There is no exaggeration in attributing ideas to Marshal Soult which can alone afford a plausible explanation of his conduct, and are, moreover, in perfect conformity with his character. To a facile and humane nature, combined with the carelessness of a condottiero, he united great versatility, a presumption that was more or less boastful, an inborn taste for intrigue and ambition which, though shallow, was restless and active, only to end in insatiable cupidity as the last resource of his disappointed hopes. Surrounded and urged on by flatterers, some of whom were no less weary than he of serving a master who wished to arrogate to himself the privilege of thinking of no one else, and others who were impatient to share the favours of a new reign; enchanted perhaps to disguise the military inactivity to which he was reduced under the semblance of a civil political organisation; encouraged, moreover, by his isolation, which permitted him to act without control up to the moment when he might decide on accepting the move as definitive, or, should it prove abortive, disown it at once,—Marshal Soult did not hesitate officially to instigate a kind of *pronunciamento* in his favour throughout the provinces of the Minho and Oporto, by means of addresses, petitions, and deputations. 'His Excellency the Duke of Dalmatia should be requested to take the reins of Government, to

represent the Sovereign, and to invest himself with all the attributes of supreme authority until the Emperor and King shall have chosen a prince of his house or of his choice to reign in Portugal.'[1]

Unfortunately, this plan—which Marshal Soult considered truly Machiavellian—this egotistical calculation of his vain and thoughtless mind, was also being made on his own account by every petty military adventurer, according to the measure of his ambition or of his personal covetousness. When an army is no longer fighting for its country's cause, or even for some ideal of glory or grandeur, which to a certain extent may be confounded with notions of justice and civilisation, interested motives obtain the ascendency, demoralisation begins, and with demoralisation the decay of military institutions. Should success fail or even seem to falter in such a contingency, the last spring breaks and signs of latent dissolution appear on all sides. On the present occasion the cause of the evil was by no means recent; it may safely be affirmed that it altogether lay in the covetous and cruel policy of the man who had undertaken the war in Spain. Was it not some infirmity of mind which made him impose such a task on his soldiers? one that required such abnegation, disinterestedness, and sacrifice, whilst he, on his side, only obeyed the inspirations of a monstrous personal egotism, amounting to a furious monomania of pride and of ambition? How could he expect virtues of the kind from troops who saw him yield to such vulgar impulses? Hitherto it had been easy to deceive the public up to a certain point as to the motives of previous wars, by disguising them under the plausible names of liberty, revolution, or independence, but no trouble had been taken to deceive any one in this case; for, from first to last, the abominable war in Spain had consisted of nothing but rapacity, trickery, violence, and delirium.

So long as the conquest of that country seemed easy and likely to yield honours or profit, all had become

[1] Circular of General Ricard, Chief of the Staff of the second *corps d'armée*, dated April 19, 1809. This curious document was published, we believe, for the first time by M. Thiers.

accomplices in it as a matter of necessity, albeit deplorable —for a crime is readily condoned by those who benefit by it. But when affairs took an unfavourable turn, and no hope of recompense for so much suffering could be seen in the distance, nor any prospect discernible save that of an interminable struggle, pitiless reprisals and the fault-finding of an ever-discontented master, to be followed, perhaps, in the end by an obscure death in the depths of some fearful gorge—zeal began to cool, and reflection supervened, bringing in its train doubt, discouragements, and finally murmurs.

The majority of the officers in this army had begun their careers at a period when independence and civilian pride were not altogether without influence, and when one single man did not constitute France; and it was possible to believe that in making war they sacrificed themselves for something more than mere caprice. They were already embittered and dissatisfied when their chief began gradually to betray interested motives, instead of offering in his own person an example of that spirit of abnegation which he demanded from them. As a natural consequence they, on their part, readily indulged in every dream most flattering to their wearied spirits, some urging Soult boldly to seize that crown towards which he was stretching his hand timidly though impatiently, others endeavouring to promote a sullen conspiracy in the army aimed against Napoleon himself. A third party, however, headed by Generals Loison and Delaborde, whose first object above all others was to maintain the honour of their flag intact, watched Soult's proceedings sharply, determined, the instant he should attempt to accept the crown, to seize him at once and to lead the army back to France. One of the conspirators, named Argenton, a very brave officer, but more daring than sensible, conceived the mad criminal idea of obtaining the co-operation of the English army itself and of its chief Sir Arthur Wellesley. According to the peculiarly incoherent plans which he laid before the English General at the three successive interviews to which he was admitted at Lisbon and subsequently at Coïmbra, Wellesley was first in an underhand manner to encourage the Portuguese towns to

declare in favour of the new monarchy. Soult being once proclaimed king, events should then guide them either to rouse the army to revolt and seize him, or make use of him for the purpose of inducing the other armies occupying the Peninsula to march against Napoleon.[1] Should the project not coincide with Sir Arthur Wellesley's views, Argenton went so far as to suggest a plan of attack by which the French troops could be made prisoners.

It is easy to perceive that the officers who remained faithful to Napoleon and those who conspired against him were alike anxious for a speedy return to France. Of all the sentiments that pervaded the different divisions of the French army, this was the most deeply rooted, satisfying at once their secret anxieties, the weariness caused by these endless and aimless wars, and the strong evidence of the perils then surrounding us. At all events, dispositions of the kind were too highly favourable to Wellesley's designs to permit of his neglecting to entertain them. He therefore encouraged Argenton warmly, and gave him the passports he demanded, in order to continue his intrigues in France. At the same time taking, with his vigorous common sense, the true measure of the man and the situation, he refused to instigate the Portuguese to offer the crown to Soult, knowing, he said, that such a step on his part would utterly destroy their confidence in him. Moreover, he carefully prevented Argenton from seeing the movements, number, or composition of his troops. Finally, whilst holding himself in readiness to take advantage of the projects of the conspirators, he entered into no engagements with them, and even during the first interview foresaw with remarkable perspicacity that, to all appearance, the plot would never be more than a dream, and ultimately end in smoke. The only result, in his opinion, to be reasonably expected from it, would be that of forcing Soult to evacuate the north of Portugal, which exactly tallied with the end he had himself all along had in view.[2]

[1] Despatches of the Duke of Wellington to Marshal Beresford, May 7, 1809; to Viscount Castlereagh, April 27, May 7 and 15.

[2] Despatches to Viscount Castlereagh, April 27, 1809.

It was probably owing to Argenton's culpable intrigues that Soult became aware in time of the attack imminently threatened him by Wellesley. Argenton having confessed the plot to General Lefebvre, whose aide-de-camp he had been, with the twofold object of warning him of the danger he was exposed to on the left bank of the Douro and of inducing him to join the conspiracy, Lefebvre at once revealed everything to Soult, who instantly had Argenton arrested together with his chief accomplices. It is known that Soult was informed of Wellesley's projects on the 8th of May, and the arrest took place at nine that morning;[1] General Lefebvre's revelation was most probably made the day before, and it is difficult, therefore, not to admit the connection between these two facts. Thus rudely roused from his dreams of royalty, Soult perceived that one course alone remained open to him,—that of instant flight. But whether it cost him too much to renounce so great a *rôle* at a moment's notice, and to exchange it for that of a fugitive general, or that he was ignorant of the full extent of the danger, certain it is that he did not act on his determination in time. However, he had the merit of being as lenient to others as to himself, and Argenton, carelessly watched, was able to effect his escape within a few days; no doubt he was recaptured later, tried and shot, but, if so, it was altogether owing to his own imprudence.

Wellesley's plan was most skilfully contrived to surprise our army, despite the strength of its positions. Taking advantage of the presence of Sylveira's insurgent corps at Amarante and Chaves, in our rear, to shut us out from the valley of the Tamega, he decided on sending Beresford with a strong detachment on our left towards Lamego and Villareal, and thus close our entrance to the Douro. Meanwhile, he himself was to attack our front with the main bulk of his forces, by marching from Coïmbra to Oporto by the most direct route. Soult finding himself barred access to these two valleys—the only issues from the Tras os Montes—would be obliged to effect his retreat towards the North by the longest road, that of Braga, and

[1] To I. Villiers, May 15.

Wellesley proposed to pursue him so rapidly that the passage of the Minho should become hazardous, if not impossible.[1] At all events, Soult would be thrown back into the depths of Galicia, and incapable of affording any co-operation to Victor when Wellesley should turn round against the latter.

On the 8th of May Beresford was at Vizeu, and two days later at Lamego, where we had no suspicion of his presence. On the same day, the 10th, our small corps of observation which was posted on the left bank of the Douro, under the orders of General Franceschi, in the neighbourhood of Albergaria-Nova, was attacked and well-nigh surrounded by the army commanded by Wellesley himself. But for the delay of the English cavalry, whose guides lost their way,—a delay that imposed complete inaction on a detachment sent by the Lake of Ovar to cut off our retreat,—Franceschi would have found himself in a desperate position. However, he succeeded, by dint of hardihood and coolness, in extricating himself and turning back to Oporto,[2] which town our troops reached in the night of the 11th of May.

Marshal Soult had given the preliminary orders necessary for insuring the retreat of the army by the valley of the Tamega; but, fully confident of the strength of his position at Oporto, he in no wise hastened to evacuate that town. So early as the 2d of May, before he even thought of such a painful necessity, he had made General Loison retake Amarante, driving away Sylveira's bands from it; and now it was on Amarante that he directed all our detached corps occupying the province of Oporto, especially that of Lorges, recalled from the Lima to the Tamega. Amarante, in fact, was essential to our safety as the key of the valley of the Tamega; but we could not keep it, except by most carefully watching the course of the Douro from Mezamfrio to Villareal, or rather to the sea; on the other hand, were it but defended, the Douro presented an almost impassable barrier against any attack coming from the south. Pro-

[1] To Castlereagh, May 18.
[2] Napier, *History of the Peninsular War.*

tected by this formidable obstacle, our army might retire with ease by Chaves and Bragança to Salamanca, where, though reduced to act on the defensive, it would continue to menace the flanks of the English army, and might even, according to Wellesley's movements, march in support of Ney in Galicia or Victor on the Tagus.

This plan was certainly the best we could adopt in view of the cruel and humiliating necessity of evacuating Portugal. It was also perfectly feasible provided we remembered that we had no longer to do with the tumultuous and undisciplined levies of the insurrection, but with an enemy as clever as he was active and enterprising. It would seem that Soult—cognisant through Argenton's revelations of the dangers that menaced him in his own camp, and, through Franceschi's retreat, of the march and intentions of the enemy—ought to have redoubled his vigilance and activity. But instead of coming to some prompt decision, such as the circumstances demanded, he determined to pass the 12th of May still at Oporto. So persuaded was he that the passage of the river was impossible, that he issued an order not to answer the fire of the English sharpshooters who lined the opposite bank.[1] And, more extraordinary still,—although informed at six o'clock in the morning of the surprise which Wellesley was meditating, he scarcely took any trouble to verify the fact, beyond making a superficial and insufficient examination.[2]

Wellesley already occupied the suburbs of the left bank, concealing his troops behind the heights of the Sarea, a small hill from the summit of which he surveyed our positions and movements without being himself seen. Perceiving the extraordinary negligence with which we guarded the approaches to the river, he instantly resolved to attempt its passage by main force, notwithstanding the apparently

[1] Deposition of the Secretary to the governor of Oporto, May 13, 1809. See the Supplementary Despatches of the Duke of Wellington, vol. vi.

[2] *Mémoires sur les opérations militaires en Galice et en Portugal*, by Lenoble. This witness is the more trustworthy from having written under Soult's guidance.

invincible obstacles of a stream three hundred yards wide and the presence of a whole army on the opposite bank. Facing the Sarea hill, on the other side of the Douro, was a building called the Seminary, not yet finished, but forming a very solid enclosure. This point he chose for the landing of his troops. By means of a small boat that had escaped our notice, one of his officers brought back to the left bank three barges which the French had drawn to the right. The first crossed over again with five-and-twenty men, who, rushing boldly through the midst of our troops, took possession of the Seminary unperceived. The two others instantly followed with the same number of soldiers, but as the third touched land our sentinels gave the alarm, and the whole shore instantly resounded with shots and tumultuous sounds. The enclosure of the Seminary, however, had been transformed into a real fortress, and we were there received with a murderous fire. It was then ten o'clock in the morning, a most unlikely and unheard-of hour for a surprise of the kind, if the enemy had not had to deal with French thoughtlessness. Meanwhile the heights of the Sarea had been covered with pieces of artillery, that swept all the approaches to the Seminary. A detachment, sent early that morning to Avintas, where we had taken no precaution to prevent the passage of the river, crossed the Douro there, under the command of Murray, and marched to the support of the defenders of this extempore citadel; while Sherbrooke, in his turn, soon passed the Douro at Villanova. In vain Generals Delaborde, Foy, and Mermet endeavoured to take the enclosure of the Seminary and to drive back the English troops that were filling the streets of Oporto; the first two were severely wounded; our soldiers, though fighting valiantly, were soon compelled to give up all hope of dislodging the enemy from his positions; and the French army evacuated Oporto precipitately, leaving the care of its wounded to the generosity of Wellesley.

Convinced that Amarante was still in General Loison's power, Soult directed the retreat on that town by Baltar and Peñafiel; but on approaching the latter place, about

one o'clock in the morning, he received most unexpected and alarming information; namely, that Loison had evacuated Amarante and the enemy had had possession of it since the previous morning. The retreat of the army was thus cut off, and Soult found himself in a position recalling in every particular that of Dupont at Baylen. In the environs of Amarante and extending to Villareal Beresford's and Sylveira's corps were concentrated. These generals, one of whom had crossed the Douro as the other descended through the valley of the Tamega, were those who had forced Loison to retire on Guimaraëns, and now intercepted the approach to that town and the route to Chaves. If Soult were to attack them and to try to open a passage by main force, it was more than probable that Wellesley would have time to come to their assistance; if, on the contrary, he retrograded in order to regain the route by Braga, he must perforce return as far as Oporto, the road to which was occupied by Murray's corps, and then file off with his flank exposed to the fire of the whole English army.

Thus, in front and rear stood a formidable enemy, emboldened by success; on the right the Douro and the Tamega presented insurmountable obstacles, on the left rose the rugged chain of the Sierra de Cathalina. But in this moment of imminent peril, Soult, hitherto so weak and inefficient, regained those qualities which had made him one of Napoleon's most able lieutenants. Learning from a pedlar that there existed an almost impracticable pathway from Peñafiel to Guimaraëns, on the abrupt slopes of the Sierra de Cathalina, he decided, on the instant, to sacrifice his baggage, ammunition, artillery, and even his military chest, and, climbing the sides of the mountain, determined to rejoin at Guimaraëns the divisions of Loison and of Lorges.

Having once arrived there, we were again at liberty to choose between the route to Braga on the left and that to Bragança by Chaves on the right. It was probable, however, that Wellesley might have preceded us at Braga, and that Chaves had long been in the enemy's power. Soult, consequently, chose an intermediate road, though a very

difficult one, which appeared to lead to Orense by Salamonde, Ruivaens, and Montalegre. The Lorge and Loison divisions were, therefore, required to make the same sacrifices as the rest of the army, by destroying their baggage and ammunition, and abandoning their guns. Thus lightened, our troops plunged into the defiles of those mountainous regions,—in fearful weather, with every stream transformed into a torrent,—fighting continually with the insurgent peasantry and the English outposts, and marking each step by the dead they left behind them. The army was twice on the point of being stopped and succumbing to petty obstructions; for, in the crossing of the Cavado and then of the Miserella, its safety was at the mercy of the insurgents who held the bridges, and its escape was due to a kind of miraculous intrepidity. Twice it was saved, contrary to all hope, by the heroism of Major Dulong. At length, after unspeakable suffering, the troops reached Orense on the 18th of May 1809, exhausted by fatigue, their clothes in shreds, and without shoes, baggage, ammunition, or artillery. Two months and a half had barely elapsed since they had triumphantly traversed that town on their way to Portugal. They came back beaten, after having lost a kingdom and six thousand men of their effective strength, some abandoned in the hospitals, others fallen in fight or assassinated by ambushes on the road.

Wellesley, however, had attained his object. Although he had not destroyed Soult, as he might at one moment have hoped to do, he had compelled him to evacuate Portugal, had thrown him back on Galicia far away from his proposed line of operation on the flanks of the English army, and in fact, to use his own expression, had placed that *corps d'armée* 'in such a state of mutilation' as to make it impossible for it to undertake anything for some time forward. If the English general inflicted no further injury on us during our retreat, the reason is to be found in the just observations contained in one of his letters to Castlereagh, where he says that troops who retained their artillery and equipments could not follow the same roads as those who had thrown away everything for flight. All

his operations from the opening of this short and brilliant campaign, so fatal to us, had been conducted alike with extreme hardihood and consummate prudence. The surprise of Oporto, where a French army and one of Bonaparte's cleverest pupils were seen to be defeated and driven from impregnable positions, alone attested true military genius. When, in view of such cautious combinations, in which nothing is ever left to chance, and of orders inspired by so striking a mixture of audacity and calculation, we read the stereotyped lamentations of French writers on 'Wellington's good fortune,'—repeated even by Jomini,—it is impossible to suppress a smile at the simplicity of the tone adopted. Unfortunately for us, the permanence of this good fortune is no less astounding than its brilliancy, for never once, even in the most difficult situations, from Vimiero to Waterloo, does it fail, nor is it possible to find such another example in history. But to those who have followed and closely observed this comparatively unknown general, who at the extremity of Europe and so far from the main theatre of war had inflicted on Napoleon two of the most serious checks which he had ever experienced; to those who have noted the many eminent qualities in his work—his sound judgment; his cool and indomitable will; his control over himself and over others; his contempt for charlatanism; his repugnance for every hazardous operation, even though it might add to his personal renown; his strategy—somewhat methodical and expectant, but always suited to the weakness of his resources; the mode in which he converted the defensive into a terrible art; his talent in never accepting battle until he had brought all the chances on his side; his solicitude for his own troops and his scrupulous probity towards his antagonists;—to those who have so watched him it will be evident that while England was weeping for Nelson and for Pitt, a man had been born to her who would prove a formidable enemy to France.

CHAPTER V

CAMPAIGN OF TALAVERA—THE WALCHEREN EXPEDITION

(*May–September* 1809)

WHILE Wellesley was wresting Portugal from us a second time, and Soult terminating his somewhat inglorious campaign, in which he displayed more activity than steady solid qualities, all our military operations in Spain were paralysed by the expectant attitude to which Napoleon's plan had condemned our other armies. According to that plan, Marshal Victor and General Lapisse had to wait for Soult's march from Oporto to Lisbon before they could advance, first towards the frontiers of Portugal, and afterwards to Andalusia. But, by the vice inherent in these ill-combined operations, and from the small amount of authority allowed to Joseph's staff, the most essential condition of this plan had not been carried out; there was, moreover, a constant impossibility of supplying defects, and nothing could ever be accomplished in proper time. Our communications, in the first place, were everywhere intercepted; a result which might easily have been foreseen on a field of operations so wide and so hotly disputed. At Madrid nothing was known of Soult's movements; they were not even aware of Wellesley's landing, still less of his march to Oporto, and it was only on the 14th June that news arrived of the evacuation of that town, which had taken place on the 12th of the previous month. Notwithstanding this uncertainty, Marshal Jourdan, who directed the operations in King Joseph's name, gave orders at an opportune moment to have the movements made that had been agreed upon. At the end of March and beginning of April, Victor, after

his victory over Cuesta at Medellin, took up his position at Merida, while Lapisse marched from Salamanca on Ciudad Rodrigo. Finding the place, however, in possession of the enemy, and not being able to besiege it, he joined Victor at Merida, and then both halted expecting to hear of Soult's march on Lisbon.

Napoleon's instructions never admitted the possibility of a check, when he had once issued an order. He had not contemplated the contingency of Marshal Soult's being stopped at Oporto; had they then the right to foresee it at Madrid and to modify the Emperor's plans? Not only would he not suffer this, but he had taken precautions that the court of Madrid should not permit itself such an encroachment on his imperial prerogatives. The commanders of corps corresponded directly with the Minister of War, Clarke, and listened to Marshal Jourdan's wise counsels merely as a matter of form. In view of the increasing anxiety respecting Soult then felt at Madrid, Jourdan gave Victor a formal order to march towards the Portuguese frontier, to make a diversion in his favour and to inquire as to his fate.[1] But Victor preferred to adhere to Napoleon's letter of instructions, which prescribed nothing of the kind, and he remained immovable at Merida until the 25th April, when, without consulting any one, he turned back to Torremocha.

The reason alleged in justification of this resolution was the reorganisation of Cuesta's army, the presence of Portuguese bands at Alcantara and of insurgent peasantry in his rear, and the necessity of finding provisions for his army in a more plentiful country.[2] Marshal Jourdan, being deeply impressed with the paramount necessity of guarding the high road of the Tagus—which was the route to Madrid and the most indispensable line of communication with Soult, Mortier, or Ney—then desired Victor to establish himself at Alcantara, the bridge of which town was of the utmost importance to us. But Victor disobeyed him again,

[1] Report of Jourdan to the Minister of War, dated June 26, 1809.

[2] Letter of Victor to Marshal Jourdan, April 25, 1809. Correspondence of King Joseph.

and seemed solely preoccupied with his expedition to Andalusia, a project that was quite impracticable for the moment, but which promised him a brilliant opportunity of playing the commander-in-chief. The result was that the Portuguese had full leisure to blow up the bridge at Alcantara, while Victor had to retreat ingloriously to Talavera, without daring to offer battle to Cuesta, whose army had been reconstituted under his very eyes.[1]

The same want of union and concert had everywhere produced the same misfortunes, without its being possible, with any justice, to impute blame to those who apparently caused them. Each commander of a corps obeying none but Napoleon,—or it should rather be said, finding himself wellnigh independent owing to the distance,—and occupying himself, as was natural, much more with the exigencies of his own position than with those of his colleagues, the maxim 'Every one for himself' soon became the first rule of conduct in a war which pre-eminently demanded a high spirit of abnegation and self-sacrifice. Thus, at the very time when Soult most needed a strong military demonstration on the frontiers of Portugal, Ney—very excusably, it is true, as he was left in total ignorance of that marshal's movements—was preparing a great expedition, in concert with Kellerman, to the province of the Asturias, and was proceeding north of Galicia at the very time when his presence was so much required in the south.

Ney started for Lugo on the 13th May, the very morrow of the day on which Soult evacuated Oporto. The Marquis de la Romana, who had thrown himself into the Asturias, seeing no hope of defending that province against such an adversary, only studied how to escape him by carefully avoiding any general action. And this he did so well, that Ney, after taking Oviedo, and flattering himself that he had driven Romana back to the sea and would force him to surrender, reached Gijon just in time to see him embark on board an English ship! This skilful party-leader had dispersed his troops by degrees, making them cross and

[1] Jourdan's Report already cited: Victor to Jourdan, May 29, 1809; to King Joseph, June 8, 1809; Jourdan to Victor, June 1.

recross ours in all directions. A few days later he landed again and rejoined them on the coast of Galicia, and, while we were scouring the Asturias on all sides, searching for an enemy who could not be caught, his bands were already besieging Lugo which Ney and Kellerman had only just quitted.[1]

Galicia therefore was, as it were, abandoned and almost fallen back into the power of the enemy, when Soult reappeared there at the head of his exhausted troops. He had no difficulty in relieving Lugo, where Ney rejoined him on the 30th May. The latter instantly placed the arsenals of Ferrol and Corunna at Soult's disposal, so that, owing to this succour, the second corps was enabled to repair its losses and recover from its fatigues in an incredibly short time. But the soldiers' reports made known, in all their details, the sad episodes of the short reign at Oporto and of the evacuation of Portugal, and the moral effect was disastrous.

During the whole of this most important and decisive month of May, Napoleon was so completely absorbed by affairs in Germany—calculated no doubt to preoccupy him, considering the check he had received at Essling—that he never gave a single order regarding Spain, except to withdraw from it the troops and officers whom he required on the Danube. He first began to show uneasiness on the 3d June, when news reached him of the English having attacked Soult; but it was not until the 11th that he applied himself seriously to examine the situation of Spain.

He instantly discovered the faults that had been committed, but far from imputing them to his own system, he cast the blame on those who had only executed his orders. They had done wrong in allowing the English to form at Lisbon, wrong in not opening communications with Soult and also with Ney, wrong in not destroying Cuesta, wrong in not driving the insurgents out of the Sierra Morena beyond La Carolina, wrong in acting at all the points of circumference—as if it was not he who had pushed his armies to all the extremities of the Peninsula, to Catalonia, Aragon, Galicia, and Portugal, after having first annihilated

[1] Report of Ney to Joseph, May 21, 1809. Napier, Jomini.

every centre of action! And Jourdan it was whom he made responsible for all these faults, being pleased to forget that he had made it impossible for him to give such orders, that he had forbidden his lieutenants to obey him, and yet that this marshal had precisely done everything that was required to prevent or repair these misfortunes, by ordering Victor to menace Lisbon and attack Cuesta, and Mortier to advance from Logroño on Valladolid. And to remedy the difficulties of a situation that had become so critical, what expedient did Napoleon propose?—that of forming the three corps under Ney, Soult, and Mortier into one single army which should at once march against the English and drive them into the sea; a very proper idea, no doubt, though rather late in date, and one which he instantly spoiled: for the supreme command of this army was not to be confided to Jourdan, the judicious, modest, experienced chief, whose authority would have been recognised by every one, but to Soult, who had become the most unpopular of marshals, to Soult lowered by his defeat and intrigues in Portugal, to Soult, in short, who had just behaved towards Ney in a manner that no proud man forgives. This was at once to paralyse the central authority of Madrid more than ever, by creating alongside it an authority equal to it if not superior, and at the same time to weaken beforehand all the springs of the new offensive force which it was felt necessary to oppose to Wellesley.[1] Soult was at Zamora in the kingdom of Leon when this order from the Emperor arrived. A misunderstanding of the gravest character, almost amounting to open enmity, had just occurred between him and Ney, at the very moment that the latter was placed under his orders. Before separating at Lugo, where, thanks to Ney's anxious care, the second corps had recovered its equipments and its strength, the two marshals agreed to make a combined expedition for the purpose of destroying Romana's bands, as well as the English establishments on the coast at Vigo.

This project once effected, our position in Galicia

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, June 3, 11, and 12, 1809.

would be consolidated anew, and Soult could then carry out his favourite plan of redescending along the Portuguese frontier until he found himself on the left wing of Wellesley's army, sufficiently near to follow and observe him. Conformably to this convention, which for greater certainty was reduced to writing, Ney marched on Vigo along the coast of Galicia, while Soult descended the Minho to Monforte, from which he expelled Romana. But instead of pursuing the Spaniard to Orense, and thoroughly defeating him by thrusting him between two fires, Soult remained motionless at Monforte, only sending out some advance guards in a totally different direction, to the valleys of the Sil and the Bibey, and on the road to Zamora. In a letter intercepted by the English,[1] he asserts in justification that his mission ended in Monforte, and that it was his colleague's duty to march on Orense and there crush Romana. But from the moment that Soult could gain so important an advantage at so little cost, was he right in leaving it to another whose forces might not be equal to the task? Ney, on his part, finding the establishments at Vigo far more formidable than he had expected, would not attack them until certain of Soult's co-operation. He contented himself with driving the Anglo-Portuguese outposts as far as Sanpayo, where he encountered a vigorous resistance, and where he suddenly heard of the presence of Romana's bands on his left. Thus threatened with a double attack by far superior forces, he wrote to Soult, but received no answer. He received information which confirmed the move of the second corps to Zamora, so he then decided to return to Compostella, and burning with anger loudly declared that his colleague had laid a snare for him with perfidy of the deepest dye. This deception induced Ney to adopt a resolution of far graver import. He had been sustaining one continued combat ever since he had occupied Galicia, and his *corps d'armée* was, in consequence, greatly reduced; so much so that he could now scarcely muster twelve thousand men when all his available forces

[1] June 25, 1809, published in Wellington's Supplementary Despatches, vol. vi.

were assembled. This was too small a number to struggle successfully against the two armies now close to him in the neighbourhood of Vigo, especially in the probable event of their increase and the certainty he had of being left without support. But this was not all: Ney now knew that Wellesley's army was preparing to cross the frontier of Portugal. What would happen if that general should take it into his head to recommence Moore's campaign, and to avenge his memory by taking a French army prisoner on the very spot at which the British army had been seen in flight?

In such a case, Ney's fate was certain beforehand; for, surrounded by Wellesley, Romana, and Noruña, who commanded at Vigo, no means of escape would be left to him. On the other hand, his presence might be most useful at other points of the Peninsula, where the state of affairs seemed more and more uncertain. Consequently, Ney decided on evacuating Galicia, and his resolve once taken, he put it into execution instantly. Carrying off with him his sick and wounded and all his artillery, the first days of July 1809 saw him arriving at Astorga.

Thus, when Napoleon's order concentrating the three *corps d'armée* under the command of Soult reached Spain, that marshal was at Zamora, Mortier at Valladolid, and Ney at Astorga, more inclined to send a challenge to his colleague than to serve under his orders. Our other military positions in the Peninsula were purely defensive. Victor had retrograded to Talavera facing the army of Cuesta, observing the valley of the Tagus, and covering the road to Madrid; Sebastiani was at La Mancha, incessantly occupied in driving back into the defiles of the Sierra Morena an army commanded by Venegas, whose real strength was unknown. Saint Cyr and Suchet, who were campaigning with varied success, one in Catalonia, the other in Aragon, without however subduing either province, could have no influence whatever on operations taking place at such a distance. The utmost they could hope was to maintain their respective positions amidst insurgents, who, though always defeated, were never disheartened.

The first effect of the concentration under Soult's com-

mand was to weaken the true centre of resistance, which lay on the Tagus and in the region situated round Madrid. After the evacuation of Portugal and Soult's retreat to Galicia, Jourdan with much sagacity foresaw that Wellesley would turn round against Victor, who was the less capable of resisting him that he had not been able to beat Cuesta even when alone. He foresaw that the two armies of Wellesley and Cuesta would naturally advance towards the capital, which was already menaced by the army of Venegas. If this danger were not averted, Joseph, who had only Victor's and Sebastiani's corps with the one that acted as his guard to depend on, would be quite incapable of resisting the triple attack.

In his dilemma Jourdan, by great efforts, persuaded Mortier to post himself at the foot of the Guadarrama, at Villacastin, where he would be within reach of King Joseph should circumstances require his aid, and yet not be too far removed from Soult's head-quarters at Zamora. But Soult, who had his own plan, and was moreover jealous of his new authority, recalled Mortier from Villacastin to Valladolid, without giving the slightest heed to Joseph's cries of distress. Not satisfied with the command which the Emperor had so inopportunely confided to him, he further strove to draw towards himself all our other military forces in Spain.

Although but slightly informed of Wellesley's projects he meditated a second campaign against Portugal, which was to begin by the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, both strong places and capable of long resistance. Such a plan demanded, as a preliminary, the creation of two corps of observation, taken from the armies of Aragon, Catalonia, and La Mancha, from which not a regiment could be withdrawn without serious danger. It implied, moreover, supplies of ammunition, money, and a commissariat, out of all proportion with the resources at Joseph's disposal. The letter in which Soult states his views was written on July 13, 1809. At that date Wellesley was advancing towards Madrid by the valley of the Tagus, and was at Plasencia, at the very spot where Soult had proposed to the king to place one of the two corps of observation.

From the nature and object of his operations, and according to his own calculations, the English general ought to have reached Plasencia much sooner. But he had been retarded by various causes beyond his control, by want of money, a fault to be attributed solely to a ministry that was incapable of comprehending the importance of his plans, by delay in obtaining authority for extending his operations in Spain beyond the provinces adjacent to the Portuguese frontier, and by the necessity of concerting his movements both with General Cuesta and the central junta. Cuesta, below mediocrity as a commander, and of an intractable temper, wished to dictate plans to the conqueror of Oporto that were constantly changing and most frequently were only absurd. Wellesley, unable to dispense with this inconvenient auxiliary, endeavoured with marvellous patience to bring him back to sounder views, though, as a rule, in vain: 'My correspondence with Cuesta,' he writes on this subject, 'has been a very curious one, and proves him as obstinate as any gentleman at the head of any army need be. He would not alter his position even to insure the safety of his army, because he supposed that this measure might be injurious to himself, notwithstanding that this alteration would have been part of an operation which must have ended in the annihilation of Victor's army.'[1]

Wellesley had been forced to succumb to the indomitable obstinacy of the Spaniard, and to modify his plans, when Victor's retreat on Talavera saved him the trouble of carrying them into effect.[2]

This retreat, in fact, simplified the position of the allied armies, who had now only to advance together up the valley of the Tagus until they encountered our troops. Wellesley had an interview with Cuesta at the Puerto de Mirabete. It was agreed that they should march together against Victor's army, while Venegas was to come out from the Sierra Morena and menace Madrid by Fuente Duenas. Wellesley knew nothing of the concentration of the three

[1] Wellington's despatches to Castlereagh, June 17, 1809.

[2] Wellington's despatches to Col. Bourke, June 9; to Cuesta, June 10; to Castlereagh, June 17.

corps d'armée under Soult, he believed that Ney was still in Galicia, and never suspected that nearly forty thousand men were assembled in the neighbourhood of Salamanca. However, he understood the necessity of guarding the passes of the mountain-chain separating old Castile from the valley of the Tagus, and with this view had brought Beresford with a corps of Anglo-Portuguese to Ciudad Rodrigo, and the duke of Parque to Almeida. Two most important defiles, those of Baños and Pereles, remaining open on his left, he entrusted their keeping to detachments of Cuesta's troops, who with great difficulty consented to send them thither. This done, the Anglo-Spanish army marched forward against Victor, intending to reach him and make him fight before the arrival of the reinforcements King Joseph was bringing to him. Wellesley had twenty-two thousand English with him.[1] Cuesta commanded about thirty-eight thousand Spaniards, troops not deficient in bravery, but incapable of manœuvring on a field of battle. In all there were sixty thousand soldiers, about one-third of whom were really efficient, but who, if they could succeed, as was feared, in joining the thirty thousand men under Venegas, would constitute a truly formidable mass in the very centre of the Peninsula.

Wellesley, however, well informed and patient though he was, had no idea as yet of the troubles awaiting him from his allies. He had barely commenced to move when there were signs of a fearful famine amongst his troops. The Spanish Government, who had agreed to provide him with food, stores, and means of transport, furnished none of these, and the country, long since exhausted, afforded no resource. The authorities, however, were profuse in promises, and in consequence he consented to continue his march. On the 20th July he was at Oropesa. On the 23d he came up with the French on the Alberche, one of the tributaries of the Tagus. Victor still stood alone; on his right he was outflanked by Wilson's guerillas, who had advanced

[1] The returns of the English army only give 20,997 men, but the officers not being included in this calculation, the real effective strength was 22,000 men.

as far as Arenas, and it was an excellent moment for attacking him. But here a fresh surprise awaited Wellesley; no entreaty could prevail on Cuesta to engage in the combat. Victor, consequently, had full time to decamp during the night and to extricate himself from his perilous position. No sooner had he disappeared than Cuesta only thought of running after him, without even knowing exactly what direction he had taken. Far from ceasing, the distress of the British troops went on increasing, and Wellesley, exasperated and pushed to extremities by so many disappointments, loudly declared that he would go no farther, and would leave his fantastic ally at liberty to act as he pleased.

Happily for him, Cuesta could not advance very far, for Joseph at length joined Victor near Toledo. The king brought with him all the forces he could hurriedly collect, consisting of his guard, a portion of the garrison of Madrid, and the corps of General Sebastiani. His army now amounted to a total of from forty-five to fifty thousand men. It was strong enough to dispute the ground with the Anglo-Spanish army, but not strong enough to feel certain of victory, although every general is supposed to possess that certainty when he holds the means of obtaining it in his hands. Such means Joseph incontestably possessed. By bringing one of Soult's three corps to Madrid, he would have had a decided superiority over Wellesley. Had he brought two, he would have been invincible. And this evidently was Jourdan's plan when he proposed to bring Mortier to Villacastin. Soult, however, had deranged this wise arrangement by sending the latter to Salamanca. Instead, therefore, of making Soult come to Madrid by Avila, and thence march against the enemy with a larger force than was absolutely required for his destruction, they were obliged to adopt another plan, more attractive perhaps, but far less sure, which consisted in throwing Soult with his three corps on the rear of the Anglo-Spanish army at Plasencia, while Joseph attacked it in the front. This plan no doubt offered many great chances of success, always provided that the two attacks could be made thoroughly simultaneous. But this condition was most difficult to

effect, and even in such a contingency Wellesley might easily shelter himself behind the Tagus, as Napoleon has remarked in his admirable criticism on the operations of Talavera.

However this might be, Soult having prejudged the question by the directions he gave to Mortier, Jourdan, in order to avoid a collision with him, which would have been fatal at such a moment, deemed it best to agree to his views, and instructed him to *advance as rapidly as possible from Salamanca to Plasencia.* This order, dated the 22d July, was handed to Soult at Salamanca on the 24th by General Foy.[1] From Salamanca to Plasencia is a distance of four marches; allowing him five or six days' time, Marshal Soult could easily have been at Plasencia with Mortier on the 30th July. Ney, who was still at Astorga, would have required many days more, but forty thousand men were meanwhile sufficient to make Wellesley suspend his offensive movement, and even force him to retrograde before Joseph's army. It was, therefore, of immense importance to Joseph not to attack the allied armies until Soult should arrive at Plasencia, for our greatest chance of success rested on our two movements being simultaneous.

But Joseph was inordinately preoccupied with the preservation of his capital. He had left Madrid suffering from an indescribable panic. All our fellow-countrymen, our officials, and those who had compromised themselves in any way with us had taken refuge with their property in the Retiro, now transformed into a fortress defended by about four thousand soldiers, who had there intrenched

[1] The question has long been discussed upon whom in reality the responsibility of this order should fall, some attributing it to Jourdan, others to Soult. The correspondence of the two generals seems to us to decide the matter: 'The result of *your letters* is,' says Jourdan, in the very letter in which the order was given, on July 22, 'and from what General Foy has told the king, that you foresaw this move would become necessary, and *that you have prepared yourself for it by uniting your three corps d'armée near Salamanca;* it now only requires to be promptly executed.' In short, the entire responsibility must be traced to him who gave Soult an independent command, namely to Napoleon.

themselves under orders of General Belliard. If Joseph continued to retrograde towards the Guadarrama, which was his natural line of retreat, and if Venegas, who had come forth from the Sierra Morena, should advance towards the capital in its uncovered condition, there would be an end to this feeble garrison, and to all the families it protected from the resentment of the populace. To these considerations of humanity were added political reasons of no small weight. Joseph had not forgotten the extraordinary moral effect produced by the evacuation of Madrid after Baylen, nor the bitter reproaches which the Emperor addressed to him on that occasion. He was evidently under the influence of these apprehensions, justifiable to a certain extent, but at all times disastrous in war, especially when he had decided on marching against the Anglo-Spanish army.

Cuesta continued to press his pursuit of Victor, contrary to Wellesley's wise advice, when, on the 25th July, his advanced guard came up with our outposts, between Alcabon and Torrijos. The Spaniards were routed in a few moments by the cavalry of Latour-Maubourg and Merlin. This beginning was encouraging for us, and our army, instead of remaining on the defensive, which would have been the most prudent course, returned to the Alberche in pursuit of the Spaniards. The latter fell back upon Talavera, supported in their retreat by English detachments, which Wellesley had most opportunely sent them. On the 27th Cuesta recrossed the Alberche, hotly pursued by our troops, who followed him sword in hand. He then consented more or less willingly to occupy the post assigned to him by Wellesley, on the ground which the latter had himself chosen to give us battle upon.

Our army appeared before Talavera towards the decline of the day on the 27th. We there found the allied troops ranged in a straight line stretching from the Tagus to the chain of mountains which border that river. The enemy's positions thus intercepted the whole right bank, and entirely closed the passage to us. From the town to the chain of mountains rose a series of small hills, difficult of approach, and terminating abruptly in one more rugged than the rest.

This height, separated from the mountain ridge only by a small valley, and against which the extreme left of the Anglo-Spanish army rested, while its right extended to Talavera and the Tagus, was the key of the whole position. On the small hills—which, as already remarked, were somewhat inaccessible, but which were uncovered and exposed to the fire of our artillery—Wellesley had posted the English troops commanded by Hill, Mackenzie, Sherbrooke, and Campbell. At Talavera itself, behind ditches, buildings, earthworks, and olive woods, the Spanish army was intrenched, in a position suited to its inexperience, and impregnable if only defended. Wellesley, who had shown himself so bold and enterprising in the short campaign in Portugal, where he had commanded his own troops, had become equally prudent and circumspect since he had seen Cuesta's army in the field, by turns rash and pusillanimous, and, in the usual fashion of insurgent levies, absolutely incapable of executing a manœuvre on the field of battle. He was determined not to fight without certainty of success, and in this view he adopted the only plan which could insure it to him under every contingency,—that of invariably maintaining himself on the defensive.

The day was already far advanced when our troops deployed before Talavera. Victor, however, whose *corps d'armée* marched first in order, did not, nevertheless, hesitate to begin the action without consulting any one. Long since well acquainted with the ground, he understood, at the first glance, the importance of the height which supported the extreme left of the English. That most essential position did not appear to have attracted Wellesley's notice, for it was almost bare of troops, being occupied only by General Donkin's brigade. It was possible, therefore, to carry it by surprise, and then to turn the English left, which would force them to change front,—always considered a most critical operation in face of the enemy,—and to fight with the river at their backs. The attack on the hill began at dusk. The Ruffin division rushed gallantly to the assault, climbed the height with difficulty, but gained the summit without allowing themselves to be stopped by a brisk volley

from the English. The defenders of the crest, too feeble to resist a bayonet charge, began to give way, when General Hill, who had perceived the danger, rushed from the neighbouring height with a brigade, renewed the combat, and forced the assailants in their turn to retire. Badly supported by Victor's other divisions that were in reserve, the Ruffin division was driven back from the top, leaving three hundred killed and wounded on the ground, and postponing the attack until next day.

This check was inauspicious. Was it wise to persist and to risk a general action? It was only the 28th of July; quite impossible, therefore, for Soult to have effected his movement on Plasencia. Although, strictly speaking, he would only require four days to come from Salamanca, all his troops were not there, and he must first collect them at that point, before he could bring them to Plasencia. Even by hastening his evolutions as much as possible he could not arrive before the 30th or 31st July, and then only with two-thirds of his army, for Ney would require at least two or three days more. If we fought on the 28th, therefore, we should deprive ourselves of the immense advantage of a combined attack. It might have been possible to run this risk if an action offered great chances of success, but that was now out of the question since Victor had roused the enemy by his unfortunate attempt. Wellesley, henceforth, knew the weak point of his position, and might be expected to be found on his guard. Such were the very serious considerations which inclined Jourdan in favour of temporising. It was evident that in presence of an army which was very slow in its movements, nay, had more or less a halting gait, our retreat towards the sources of the Alberche could be effected without danger. But Joseph, ever trembling for his capital, which would thus remain uncovered for some days, preferred to renew an attack, persistently instigated by Victor, who was more than ever confident of success, in the hope of effacing the petty humiliation which the enemy had inflicted on him.

On the 28th, at dawn of day, after having startled the English line by a brisk cannonade, Victor again despatched

the Ruffin regiments to the assault of the height, supported this time by the Villatte division. These brave troops impetuously escaladed the hill under fire from its defenders, and nothing resisted their first onslaught. On reaching the summit, however, they found all the forces of the previous day ranged in battle array on its platform, supported by fresh reserves which Wellesley had sent thither. Nevertheless, they did not shrink from the combat, despite the terrific volleys which decimated their ranks. Soon, however, a general charge of Hill's troops forced our people to give way, and they were driven down into the ravine, after having lost fifteen hundred men in the space of forty minutes.

This second check was far more serious and far less excusable than the former one; first, because the necessity of carrying this height at any cost had been admitted, if we wished to gain the battle; next, because we had the means to take it but did not know how to make use of them. Victor employed only two divisions in this murderous onslaught, whereas he ought to have brought half the army to bear upon it had it been necessary. After these two successive defeats success became less and less likely, for the approach to the hill which we wished to carry being much easier for the English than for us, and much nearer their positions than ours, they could send as many reinforcements for its defence as we could for its assault and more promptly. The reasons which Jourdan had in the morning alleged for retreat were stronger now that our soldiers had begun to be discouraged. But Marshal Victor was wounded to the quick in his military pride. He again insisted with so much confidence on continuing the combat that Joseph once more yielded, this time as much from weakness as conviction, for at that very moment he received a letter from Soult stating that he would not be at Plasencia until between the 3d and 5th of August.

When this decision was come to the necessity was acknowledged of making the action general along the whole line, thus to give Victor's soldiers at least the

advantage of a diversion, and to engage the attention of the English on several points at once. This plan was all the more natural that their centre, which had not yet been engaged, was not difficult of approach, and though the position of the Spaniards on their right seemed inaccessible, something unexpected on their part might always be looked for. Only the day before, one portion of their troops had been seized with a panic in the first moment of surprise at the appearance of our cavalry, and had fled as far as Oropesa in fearful disorder. A well-led attack on their positions might, therefore, produce incalculable results, despite the difficulties it presented.

Towards two o'clock in the afternoon the soldiers of the two armies, who by common consent had suspended the combat and mingled without distrust to quench their thirst at a small stream which separated their positions, returned to their ranks. Sebastiani's corps commenced the action in the centre, under protection of formidable artillery. The German division of Leval, having incautiously moved without support on the point where the English and Spanish positions joined, was forced to retreat with the loss of several guns. But another attack, led by Lapisse and Sebastiani against the divisions of Campbell, Sherbrooke, and Mackenzie, was more successful, and our soldiers began to gain ground in the centre. Meanwhile Victor prepared to assault anew the height which he had promised to carry; 'for,' he had exclaimed, 'if he could not take it, making war must be no longer thought of.' He attacked it simultaneously in front and flank, turning it through the ravine that separated it from the mountain. This turning movement had been executed by the Villatte division. As they crossed the valley however, a brigade of cavalry posted there by Wellesley charged them at full speed. Our soldiers partly avoided the shock, but their advance was stopped, and Victor's manœuvre rendered useless. The 23d regiment of English light dragoons, carried away by their zeal, rushed past them, pursued their course with incredible fury, and penetrating through our line charged recklessly up to our very rear-guard. There, however, charged in its turn by

our lancers and Westphalian cavalry, it was sabred, and left half its men on the ground. The combat continued in the centre. Lapisse and Sebastiani, who for a moment had been driven back by the brigade of guards which had advanced to support Sherbrooke, renewed a vigorous attack against them and ultimately drove back in disorder the Anglo-German legion which had endeavoured to resist them. The English centre was half-broken and gave way before us at that point, when an energetic and well-timed attack by Colonel Donellan, at the head of the 48th regiment, abruptly changed the fortune of the day. The English troops rallying round him regained the victory which was escaping them, and their artillery, better directed than before, so thinned our ranks that our disheartened soldiers had to be led back to their positions.

The battle of Talavera was lost to us, for we had failed in everything we had undertaken; but it had not the consequences of a defeat. The English army was exhausted by the unequal contest it had sustained. It had borne the brunt of the attack alone, the Spaniards having only taken a subsidiary part. Moreover, it was in cruel want of provisions, having been on half-rations since the 22d of July. It had lost rather more than 6000 men, while the French had lost upwards of 7000; but this was more keenly felt by the English on account of their small numbers. Wellesley therefore did not order a pursuit, which might have compromised his success, and his troops encamped on the ground they had so well defended.

In the night between the 28th and 29th our army began its retreat, without being disquieted by the enemy. Next day Joseph detached Sebastiani's corps to protect Madrid against Venegas,—a clear proof, as he ventured upon it with impunity after losing a battle, that he might have done so sooner. Venegas had been of no use to the Anglo-Spanish army: he had remained immovable at Daymiel in La Mancha at the time when his assistance was most needed. Incredible as it may seem to any one who has not witnessed the working of party hatred, it is nevertheless true that he was encouraged in his inaction by the

junta of Seville, who were afraid that Cuesta might grow too powerful. If he had captured Madrid a few days previously he would have produced one of those great theatrical effects which instantly change the face of affairs, but he had wilfully lost his opportunity, and now that he was certain to be defeated he marched confidently against the enemy, who however would spare him the trouble of going far to look for him.

Victor remained at a short distance from the Alberche waiting for the expected effect of Soult's apparition on the English rear, which could not now be long delayed. The latter, preceded by Mortier's corps, arrived at Plasencia on the 3d of August, while Ney followed him by Salamanca. Inexcusable as Joseph had been for the precipitation with which he had attacked the enemy on the 28th, Soult was not less so for the dilatoriness of his movements. Both on this occasion obeyed a secret impulse which betrayed itself in every line of their correspondence, that of playing the principal part in the destruction of the English army. According to the marshal's plan the king should have limited himself to keeping the English at bay until he came to strike the final blow; according to the king's idea, the marshal ought to have come only to finish off the defeat, when Joseph had driven the English back on Plasencia. Each had only a secondary part in the conceptions of his colleague, while each stood first in his own plan; a fact in itself sufficient to destroy all our advantages, and the direct consequence of the divided commands and of those ill-defined responsibilities which Napoleon had created in the Peninsula.[1]

Wellesley was still occupied in recruiting his army after the fatigues of Talavera, when, on the 2d of August, he

[1] See, on Talavera, the correspondence of King Joseph, July and August 1809; the reports of Jourdan and of Victor, and the very instructive arguments of the latter with Joseph; Soult's report to Clarke, dated the 13th of August; Cuesta's report, dated from Seville, Sept. 7, 1809; the description by General Desprez; Wellington's despatches, July 29, 1809; Jourdan's intercepted letters to Berthier and Soult, dated July 30, 1809; Napier's History of the Peninsular War; Lord Londonderry; Jomini; Toreo, etc.

heard of the presence of Soult's first detachments at Plasencia. Being persuaded that they still consisted merely of the corps that had occupied Portugal, he at once started to meet them with 17,000 English, leaving the Spanish army at Talavera, to whom he entrusted the care of his wounded and the defence of the passage of the Tagus. On the 3d of August he was informed at one and the same moment that there were at least two corps at Plasencia and that Joseph was about to rejoin Victor and resume the offensive. Thus menaced with a double attack by forces far superior to his own, and understanding all the danger of his position, he instantly changed his line of retreat. Recrossing the Tagus at Puente de l'Arzobispo, he sent a detachment at full speed to blow up the bridge at Almaraz before our arrival there, and, temporarily protected by the barrier which the river formed against us, he withdrew to Truxillo by the impracticable roads of the Sierra de Guadalupe. Either from indecision or fatigue our army did not pursue him. Cuesta, left to his own inspirations, had forestalled Wellesley's movements, abandoning all the wounded of the English army at Talavera.

Some days later, on August 11th, Sebastiani, who had succeeded in coming up with Venegas, inflicted a most sanguinary defeat on that general at Almonacid, not far from Toledo. But neither this victory, which was more seriously disputed than those we usually gained over the Spaniards, nor Wellesley's precipitate retreat in any way effaced the bad effect of our last campaign. The check we suffered at Talavera was apparently merely an attack repulsed, and the enemy was not able to claim any of the advantages of victory; but the whole aspect of the operations that had accompanied it was most unfavourable to us. This small English army, not larger than one of our *corps d'armée*, had, under Wellesley's command, forced us to evacuate Portugal and Galicia, where we could not return; it had advanced into the heart of the Peninsula, had thrown such alarm into the capital that at one moment all seemed lost, and, in order to make it withdraw, we were reduced to the necessity of concentrating against it every means at

our disposal. What could more aptly prove to Europe the weakness of our rule in Spain?

Napoleon did not deceive himself for an instant, in spite of the triumphant bulletins which Joseph in his vanity sent him about Talavera, and which Marshal Jourdan had the weakness to countersign. 'Sire,' wrote Joseph on the morrow of the battle, 'the English army was yesterday driven from its positions!' All the rest of his report was in the same pleasing style. The *Gazette de Madrid* published that 'the English left had been *cut up and destroyed* by the duke of Belluno.'[1] But Napoleon's merciless clear-sightedness saw through these awkward attempts at dissimulation, and in a few lines he pointed out with admirable good sense all the defects of the plan that had been adopted. Why were our forces divided at such a critical moment? Why not have drawn Soult to Avila and Madrid in order to fight with him? Could it not have been foreseen that the English, in consequence of the move on Plasencia, would place themselves in shelter behind the Tagus? Finally, the battle once being decided, how could Victor justify his ill-advised attacks?

Only one answer could be given. Why had he given Soult and Victor power to set the orders and counsels of Jourdan at nought? What touched him, however, more than all the faults that had been committed was his brother's dissimulation. Had we, or had we not, lost guns at Talavera? Wellesley said Yes; Joseph, No. Napoleon never hesitated for one minute in believing Wellesley rather than his brother, and in that particular he was right. He pursued the inquiry until he at last compelled Sénarmont to confess the truth, at least partially. Joseph, moreover, following the invariable system of Napoleon's bulletins, had immeasurably increased the number of the enemy's forces, and reduced his own in like proportion. But Napoleon, who considered the proceeding excellent for himself, declared it detestable in his imitators. 'Truth is due to me!' he indignantly exclaims in a letter where he points out the inaccuracies of what he calls the *carmagnoles* of Jourdan

[1] See the extract published in the *Moniteur* of August 9, 1809.

and the dogmatic reports of Sebastiani. But he had instructed them in this as in many other respects, and whom could he blame for the fidelity of his pupils?[1] One fact paints the man better than any other—namely, that at the very time when he was endeavouring to demonstrate to Joseph that a general ought to exaggerate the number of his forces threefold and diminish those of his enemy in the same ratio, 'because it is in the nature of men to believe in the long run that the lesser number ought to be beaten by the greater,' and also in order to inspire the soldier with a feeling of his superiority over the enemy, he adds in the same breath, 'when I vanquished the Austrian army at Eckmühl, I was *one against five*, and yet our soldiers believed that they were at least equal in numbers to the enemy!'—a statement that was an unblushing falsehood; again farther on he says, 'instead of confessing that I had only 100,000 men at Wagram, I take care to persuade every one that I had 220,000 men.'[2] It was impossible to refute himself by a more complete opposition between theory and practice.

Nevertheless, in spite of the faults committed, of our domination being shaken, and our prestige gone, the first result of the campaign was favourable to us in Spain as well as in Austria, and Napoleon, who had skilfully prolonged the negotiations with the latter power, could now make use of this great fact to force her from her last intrenchments. In his communications with the Austrian negotiators there had been no question hitherto save of his desire to restore peace between the two countries, of his disinterestedness, his moderation, his generosity. 'France had never envied Austria her possessions. . . . The generosity which France has shown since the Peace of Presburg, the Emperor is ready to show again,' etc. He insisted only on the urgency of disarming the Landwehr, of reducing the

[1] See on the subject of these curious recriminations Napoleon's correspondence with Clarke and Joseph, and that of Joseph with Jourdan and Sénarmont during the months of August and September 1809. However, much as he in secret blamed Joseph for his faults, he in public criticised what he called 'the ignorance, falseness, and folly of the English general.' See the *Moniteur* of Sept. 28, 1809.

[2] To Clarke, October 10.

regular line to half its number, and of expelling all French subjects; as for other conditions of peace he designedly left them vague and appeared to care little about them.[1]

This tone, so unusual in him after victory, he was quite ready to change on the first good news from Spain, and he impatiently waited to hear of the retreat of the English in order to bear down heavily on the Austrian negotiators. But, from the inconvenience inherent to such distant operations, the news did not reach him until after that of another event which very much diminished its importance, and placed everything again in doubt just when all seemed to have been decided. On the 6th of August 1809 Napoleon received a letter from Clarke, announcing that 200 British sail, of all sizes, had been signalled off the Isle of Walcheren. These 200 sail were but the advance-guard of a fleet that consisted of 900 vessels of every class. It was in fact the great maritime expedition of the English which they had at length resolved to bring into action.

The co-operation brought to the coalition by England had been too long delayed to be now of much effect. The English press almost unanimously predicted that it would arrive too late, and the *Moniteur* did not fail to reproduce their predictions.[2] In Germany the die was cast; for Austria, henceforth, could merely look on at any effort made in her favour. In Spain the issue was more doubtful, and the battle of Talavera had been fought there at the very time the British fleet made its appearance off the coast of Holland. The expedition started, not only after the opportune moment when it might have set the whole of Germany in a blaze, but at such a distance from the centre where the great combats were taking place, that it could have no weight except as a sort of episode: even were it crowned with complete success, it could at most improve the position of the vanquished, but not revive their fortunes. The British fleet had so long remained inactive at a time when action was most important, that, owing to the absence of any precise information as to its exact force, every one

[1] To Champagny, July 24, 1809.
[2] See in particular the *Moniteur* of July 1809.

had ended by considering it nothing more than a kind of scarecrow,—a convoy of transports destined to carry reinforcements to the army in Spain; an opinion which Napoleon himself fully shared.[1] Such an hypothesis could not alarm him, for he felt certain of being able to reduce Austria to the last extremity before an expedition of the sort could in any way influence the fate of the war.

The instant he received Clarke's letter he saw both the object of the expedition and the result it might have. The object evidently was the destruction of our squadron and of our establishments at Antwerp. Taking things at the worst, the English undoubtedly could attain this twofold end, but nothing more. He was not the man, however, who would allow himself to be turned away from his principal aim by such a diversion, no matter how vexatious it might be. Consequently he immediately decided 'that this expedition should in no way influence his operations in Austria, and that he would not send one man to Holland.'[2] France could parry the blow by her own resources alone. Independently of the necessity of not relaxing his hold on Austria in any way, there were other motives for this course, which he detected with a wonderfully sure and quick eye. The town of Antwerp, though carelessly guarded at that time, was nevertheless a very strong fortress, and could not be captured except by a rapid and bold attack. If the English attacked it successfully and with all due promptitude, the reinforcements sent from Austria would arrive too late; if, on the contrary, they proceeded to besiege it methodically and slowly, reinforcements from the adjoining departments would suffice to enable the place to resist them for more than six months, and by that time he would doubtless have found some means either of succouring it without weakening his own resources, or of driving the court of Vienna out of its last intrenchments.

Thus, the too exclusive desire of destroying our maritime forces at a time when they were no longer causing any great danger to England, sensibly lessened the chances of success

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, July 30, 1809.
[2] Napoleon to Clarke, August 7, 1809.

in a diversion which, had it been better conducted, and above all directed at a point nearer the seat of war, might have seriously compromised our position on the borders of the Danube. The greater number of the faults committed by the coalition almost invariably arose from each power seeking its own special advantage rather than the interests common to all, without reflecting that this alone rendered combined effort and joint action impossible, and the blow aimed at our maritime forces seemed the less pressing that Napoleon had apparently given up all intention of fighting at sea, that the English everywhere blockaded our squadrons, and shut them up in the ports, and that they had just caused us a true disaster in the Isle of Aix.

On the 11th of April previous, towards ten o'clock on an intensely dark night, our squadron at Rochefort, which had been blockaded by a fleet under Admiral Gambier for upwards of a month, suddenly found itself attacked—notwithstanding the stockades protecting it—by thirty-five flaming fire-ships, sent floating in for the purpose of destroying our vessels. An indescribable scene of confusion at once occurred, every one trying to save himself amid the masses of moving fire, some letting their ships drift, others sinking the fire-ships by cannonading them. All, however, escaped destruction by miraculous good fortune with but little injury. But on the following day four of our vessels, which had been forced to run close to the shore and had been shipwrecked on the rocks, were cannonaded and burnt, some by the English squadron and others by their own crews who were obliged to abandon them.

This misfortune, which could scarcely be imputed to the commander of the squadron, irritated Napoleon to the highest degree, as everything did which gave a fresh proof of the inefficiency of his navy. But instead of attributing it to the imprudent orders which had concentrated our squadron in a roadstead too easy of access to the enemy, he blamed the officers, who had been the victims rather than the authors of the catastrophe. On every occasion of the kind he should have what he called 'an example'; a

favourite expression which proved that the predominating thought in his mind was not to act with justice, but to produce at any price a certain intimidating effect, and to find a culprit, even if that culprit had only been unfortunate. He therefore caused an officer to be tried, condemned, and executed with merciless rigour, whose whole crime consisted in having failed to carry out the letter of naval rules and regulations. Lafon, the captain of the 'Calcutta,' had behaved with incontestable bravery on that day. Run aground on the reefs of the *Palles*, with his crew incomplete, half his artillery unfit for use, and his vessel riddled by several of the enemy's guns, he nevertheless resisted until four o'clock in the afternoon, having been himself wounded in the fight. But a panic having seized his crew at the moment of their abandoning the ship, he got into the boats with the view of maintaining order there, before all the men had left the vessel. He had thus failed in observing the law which required him to leave last of all. And it was for this infraction of the letter rather than of the spirit of the regulations, subject at most to a disciplinary punishment, that he was now tried. Condemned with regret by his companions in arms, who knew and valued his courage, he paid the penalty of death, like so many others, for the wrongful illusions of a proud spirit which rebelled against the force of things.[1]

The expedition to Antwerp was undertaken with far more powerful means than that of Rochefort, on account of the greatness of its end and aim. It was clear, in fact, that if the English could succeed in capturing that place, and in fortifying themselves there, after having destroyed our fleet, they would possess, thanks to their navy, an offensive post of formidable strength. If, on the other hand, they might consider it wiser to evacuate the place, from any difficulty in maintaining it, the destruction of our vast marine establishments would alone be sufficient compensation for such an armament. On the 29th of July

[1] See the documents of the trial published in the *Moniteur* of Oct. 11, 1809, and in the work by his grandson, *Histoire des brûlots de l'Ile d'Aix*, per Jules Lafon, 1867.

1809 their fleet, composed of forty vessels of the line, thirty frigates and from seven to eight hundred transports, gunboats, brigs and corvettes, hove in sight off the Isle of Walcheren. These numberless vessels had on board an army of 40,000 men, 9000 horses and 150 large siege guns, besides an immense quantity of military stores. The naval forces were commanded by Admiral Strachan, the troops by Lord Chatham, elder brother of Pitt, a court official without any military title, who in no way resembled that great man, and had, it was said, sought and obtained this most important command in the hope of its enabling him to recover from some financial difficulties.

We had scarcely any means at the moment of opposing this formidable armament. Owing to the undue extension of our territory, and to those distant wars which took all our disposable military forces to Spain, Austria, and Italy, our national frontiers were everywhere unprotected, and our seaboard, from the Channel to the North Sea, was almost defenceless. At Flushing, in the Isle of Walcheren itself, some battalions of auxiliaries, composed of Dutch, Irish, and Prussian deserters headed by a small number of French, formed a garrison of about 3000 men, commanded by General Monnet, a veteran of our republican wars. Close by, General Rousseau occupied the fort of Breskens with a few troops, barely sufficient for its defence. A few hundred men in the small forts which protected the passages of the Scheldt at Batz, Lillo, and Sansvliet, two or three thousand soldiers at Antwerp itself, but without one single gun on the ramparts, and some feeble reserves along the rest of the coast, consisting of conscripts and national guards employed to watch the remnants of our flotilla rotting at Boulogne, with the squadron of Missiessy posted at the mouth of the Scheldt, but incapable of guarding it,—these were the only obstacles which the English could encounter on their road. There is scarcely any doubt that if, instead of losing precious time off Flushing, they had landed their army at Ostend or Blankenberg and pushed right on to Antwerp by Bruges or Ghent, they would have taken the

place by surprise and carried it almost without a blow.[1] The fall of Antwerp would then have necessarily involved the loss of our squadron, which would have thus been cut off from its only chance of retreat.

But the prestige of our arms was still so high that Chatham did not dare to venture on the territory of the Empire even for a march of five-and-twenty leagues. He executed his surprise with the prudent and methodical slowness of a general who is practising manœuvres, as though it were a point of honour with him to allow us all the leisure essential to our outmanœuvring him. He landed a portion of his troops to the north of the Isle of Walcheren, in order to march them thence to the siege of Flushing. The rest of his army occupied the islands of Beveland, the most southerly one in particular, from whence they had orders to advance at once against the fort of Batz. This fort, situated on the very point where the Scheldt divides into two branches before it reaches the sea, commanded the larger one, and our squadron could not return to Antwerp without passing under its guns. If it had been taken by surprise,—easy from the land side,—the retreat of our vessels to Antwerp would have been rendered impossible. But Admiral Missiessy had no more intention of letting himself be surrounded at the mouths of the Scheldt than he had had of allowing himself to be shut up in the narrow harbour of Flushing. On the 31st of July he re-ascended from the western to the upper Scheldt, leaving the fort of Batz behind him and placing himself under shelter of the forts of Lillo and Liefkenschoeck. Thus, when the English, on the 2d of August, appeared before Batz, which surrendered on the first summons, our squadron was safely anchored beneath the walls of Antwerp.

While Chatham was erecting formidable batteries on every road round Flushing, incapable though the place was of resisting their fire, especially if the fleet were to make a combined attack, the council entrusted with the government of France during Napoleon's absence was a prey to

[1] Jomini and M. Thiers hold this opinion, supported on this point by all the contemporary documents.

the utmost perplexity. Utterly divided in opinion, its members veered from one side to another and in opposite directions, wasting time in endless discussions instead of employing it in action. Some were influenced by Cambacérès and Clarke, others by Fouché and Decrès; and affairs would have come to a standstill, had not Fouché taken upon himself to act without the knowledge of his colleagues, and to authorise measures to which there were certainly many drawbacks, but which the imminence of the danger imperatively demanded. Fouché, who was then acting in the double capacity of Minister of the Interior and Minister of Police, in consequence of the illness of his colleague Cretet, had the merit of at once perceiving that it was necessary to overawe the enemy by a great national demonstration, and he demanded that, besides sending all the available troops to Belgium, the National Guards of the northern departments should be immediately mobilised.

Fouché instantly despatched the order to the prefects, without waiting to have it ratified by the council. 'Let us prove to Europe,' said he in his circular, 'that although the genius of Napoleon can shed lustre on France, his presence is not necessary to enable us to repulse the enemy.'[1] Clarke and Cambacérès, their minds oppressed with the danger of conspiracies and of revolutionary agitation, pushed distrust of their colleague to the extreme of folly, and the recollection of his past life, of his intrigues, and of his undeniable superiority as a man of action, inspired them with an aversion not unmixed with fear. They considered his proposal for raising 30,000 men amongst the National Guards as a mere snare and party manœuvre. In their eyes it was nothing but a means planned by this old member of the Reign of Terror for creating a formidable army for himself in the interior, ready for any contingency at a moment which every one foresaw might occur—namely, the death or defeat of Napoleon. They knew, moreover, how much the Emperor abhorred everything like a display

[1] The *Moniteur* did not publish this circular. It only published the one addressed to the Mayors of Paris (August 25, 1809).

of opinion, or popular agitation, or appeal to the nation. They knew his instinctive and suspicious repugnance to all that exceeded the bounds of the administrative routine, such as he had made it; and they dreaded incurring his anger by measures which might provoke scenes of disorder. Under the influence of these strange apprehensions, which deprived them alike of patriotism, discernment, and even feeling of danger, the wise Cambacérès was heard to exclaim in answer to his colleague's earnest entreaties, 'Monsieur Fouché! I do not want to get myself beheaded,'[1] while Clarke and Fouché soon treated each other reciprocally as the 'Jacobin' and 'the traitor sold to the English.'[2] Hence Fouché's vehement expostulations had no influence whatever upon his colleagues. They would adopt none but the usual regular methods, making the small organised forces, which consisted of gendarmerie, provisional battalions and artillery depôts, proceed from the provinces of the Centre and the North to Belgium. These troops, united to the five or six thousand men remaining with King Louis of Holland, ought to suffice, according to their idea, for the defence of Antwerp; and, should more energetic and decided measures become necessary, they intended to await the Emperor's instructions on that head.

In reality, neither Fouché nor Cambacérès was altogether mistaken as to Napoleon's presumed dispositions. They were equally right and wrong, for they each viewed his character from a different side. The one thought of the man of action; the other of the official personage, the pompous creator of an immovable order of things, the declared enemy of every idea not emanating from himself. Fouché saw justly that, according to his master's opinion as well as his own, action was the one essential. But he judged wrongly in imagining that he would be pardoned for a service rendered with so bold a hand and so much independence of judgment. Cambacérès had guessed rightly that once the danger were past all these patriotic demonstrations would become supremely troublesome and

[1] Thibaudeau.

[2] *Mémoires* of Philippe de Ségur.

odious. Fouché might have the first impulse produced by clear evidence of peril in his favour, but Cambacérès could calculate with more certainty on the inevitable reaction and the permanent tendencies of a character which he knew better and feared more than any one else.

The Minister of Police, no doubt, obtained a complete triumph over his colleagues, when the Emperor had all the despatches under his eyes that informed him successively of the arrival of the English fleet off the Isle of Walcheren and of the landing of Chatham's army. The very instant he received Clarke's first message, on the 6th August, and even before he had heard anything of Fouché's arrangements, he saw the necessity of intimidating the English by a national movement in default of a great display of military force, and he desired the Minister of War 'to draw up circulars such as would excite the nation, and to raise 30,000 men of the National Guard in the Northern departments.'[1] At the same time he commanded the most urgent measures to be taken for stopping the enemy's progress, and the plan to be adopted in this campaign was an essentially defensive one. They were to bring the garrison of Flushing up to its full complement, especially in artillery and officers, to order General Monnet to cut the dykes and flood the surrounding country, to concentrate the *élite* of the National Guards at Ghent, commanded by General Rampon, so as to enable them to reinforce the garrison in the Isle of Cadzand, to call all the gendarmerie that could be collected by General Moncey to Lille, and all the disposable troops of the king of Holland to Berg-op-Zoom, in order to be able to march them to Antwerp at the first signal. As to the fleet, it was to take refuge at Antwerp itself. No risk, however, should be run with troops of such inferior quality. Flushing could hold out for two months, and by that time the English army would perish from fever and the inundations.[2]

When he learnt the opposition which Fouché's proposals had met with from Cambacérès and Clarke, his natural

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, August 6, 1809.
[2] Napoleon to Clarke, August 7, 8, and 9.

impatience changed to anger, and he broke forth in invectives: 'Did they wish, then, to allow the English to come and surprise them in their beds? It was not 30,000 but 60,000 National Guards that should have been raised. The attitude they had adopted on that occasion was disgraceful and shameful, and Fouché alone had understood what ought to be done!'[1]

The council had been equally undecided and divided in opinion as to the commander-in-chief to be appointed to this extempore army: Fouché proposed Bernadotte; Cambacérès, the king of Holland. The question was well worth examining. In fact, the more feeble this army, the more necessary it was to supply its deficiency in experience and in strength by a good commander.

Bernadotte undeniably had the best claims for this post, but his presence in Paris at that moment was alone caused by his being in disgrace, and no one was ignorant of the hatred Napoleon bore him, especially since the period of Moreau's trial. At that very moment the Emperor had almost publicly inflicted the deepest injury upon him. After the battle of Wagram, Bernadotte, who was hurt at no justice having been done to the Saxon troops under his command, unwisely published an order of the day in which he complimented the soldiers on the courage and firmness they had displayed during the days of the 5th and 6th of July.

The Emperor, the more deeply irritated by this indirect reproach because it was partly merited, answered it by another order of the day, addressed, it is true, only to the commanders of corps, but promptly and maliciously made public, and couched in language most insulting to the marshal. 'Bernadotte,' it said, 'has taken glory to himself which belongs to others. His order of the day tended to give false pretensions to troops by no means first-rate. It was contrary to truth, policy, and national honour.'[2]

On a thousand other occasions he had taken pains to

[1] Napoleon to Cambacérès, August 10; to Clarke, August 10, 11, 13, 1809.

[2] Order of the day of August 5, 1809. Schönbrunn.

depreciate Bernadotte's character and talents. But although he felt real aversion to this marshal for his independence, his ambition, and high spirit, he nevertheless at heart really esteemed his energy and military qualities. Proof of this occurred on the very day after he wrote this insulting order, without foreseeing that he would so soon want the man he was thus disgracing; for, on the 11th of August, under the stern pressure of danger, he pointed him out to Clarke as the one whom he ought to put at the head of this movement, rather than Moncey, Bessières, or Kellermann, although also unemployed. 'If Flushing be taken,' he wrote shortly afterwards to Bernadotte himself, 'I can only attribute it to want of head on the part of the commandant. In that respect I consider Antwerp impregnable. I confide in your bravery, skill, and experience.' But Bernadotte was too clever to be deceived in this manner; he knew that such compliments had but one meaning—namely, that he was wanted. Meanwhile Napoleon blamed Cambacérès severely for having thought of giving the command to King Louis, under the pretext of his being the *Grand Connétable* of the Empire. Is it not exactly, said he, as if one wished to give Murat command of the fleet under the pretext of his being an admiral? But, in return, might not the Arch-chancellor have replied, that if Louis could have been suddenly made king in a country of which he knew nothing, why not with equal justice suddenly make him a general?

The measures ordered by the Emperor were executed with all the promptitude demanded by the circumstances. In the first days of August King Louis went from Aix la Chapelle to Berg-op-Zoom, where he had concentrated 8000 Dutch,[1] whom he then distributed on all the points that were most menaced. Rampon started for the Isle of Cadzand with his national guards, to reinforce General Rousseau. The provisional battalions of conscripts, the depôts, and mounted gensdarmes were sent in haste to Antwerp, which soon possessed a respectable garrison. Bernadotte himself arrived there on the 15th of August,

[1] Documents on Holland, published by King Louis.

and displayed much zeal and activity in forming and exercising all these inexperienced troops. The national guards, it is true, called so unexpectedly to a share in renown which they did not in any way desire, showed as a rule great languor and coldness.[1] Nor could this be surprising. Where was the benefit of their having created a strong government and submitted to the despotism of the Empire, if they were thus to see themselves exposed to surprises and panics such as they had scarcely known during the Revolution? What was the advantage of so colossal a power, if it did not know how to guarantee them security? What glory was there in occupying the capitals of foreign countries, when their own was left uncovered and exposed to the insults of the enemy? Where was the use, in short, of maintaining an army of 600,000 men at such enormous expense, if, at the same time, they were obliged to have recourse to levies *en masse*, to requisitions, and to all the primitive expedients of a nation possessing no organised defence?

These facts were a cutting commentary on the Imperial system, and the lesson was intelligible to every one. There is no doubt that reflections of the kind had a great share in the repugnance shown by these men to quitting their homes, which they considered they had acquired the right to inhabit peacefully. But such repugnance was better founded than they imagined. No sooner had Napoleon begun to foresee the thorough failure of the English against Antwerp, than this levy, which before long was to number 80,000 men,—the last reserve of France, now so completely exhausted,—became nothing more in his eyes than an additional army for the war against Austria; an army which, by his own admission, he could not otherwise have raised, and which he intended, according to circumstances, should serve him either in influencing his negotiations with the court of Vienna, or, if need be, in marching against that power.[2]

[1] Philippe de Ségur, *Mémoires*. This writer is the more trustworthy on this point that he speaks here *de visu*, having had command of the cavalry in this levy.

[2] Napoleon to Champagny, August 19, 1809.

Everything Napoleon had anticipated was, in fact, about to be confirmed by events, except in the matter of Flushing. That place, which he supposed could hold out for two months at least, was in reality incapable of resisting the combined attacks of the army and the English fleet. The inundation could only retard its fall by a few days, and General Monnet, who defended it as best he could, gave the order to cut the dykes. But whether the level of the ground had been raised, or that a wrong calculation as to the height of the waters had been made, certain it is, that the opening produced but little effect and in no way hindered the English from erecting their batteries on the roads surrounding Flushing. On the 12th of August, after a summons to surrender had been sent to the town, 1200 pieces of artillery simultaneously opened fire by land and sea, and riddled Flushing with shot and shell. At the end of a three days' terrific bombardment, every house in the place being on fire or in ruins, our batteries dismounted, and one-third of our garrison no longer fit to bear arms, the population in despair vehemently demanded a capitulation, then become inevitable, and Monnet, who had bravely done his duty, surrendered the place just as an assault was to have been made which he was no longer capable of repulsing (August 15, 1809).[1]

The taking of Flushing was the only advantage England gained by this gigantic expedition, the largest that had ever left her shores. Nearly 10,000 of her soldiers were suffering from marsh fever, and this number was daily increasing, while they also learned that Antwerp was not only now prepared against surprise, but capable of sustaining a regular siege. Moreover, as invariably occurs in so disastrous an expedition, disunion had taken place amongst its commanders. Admiral Strachan and Lord Chatham threw the responsibility upon each other of the check which seemed

[1] According to the testimony even of Chatham and of Admiral Strachan, Flushing was on fire on the evening of August 14, and the town 'presented a fearful picture of destruction!' See Strachan's report dated August 17, 1809, and Chatham's dated the 11th, Annual Register for the year 1809.

likely to follow so ill-begun an enterprise, and they could not agree as to the subsequent operations. On the 26th of August the combined forces had not advanced beyond Batz, and the obstacles seemed to be increasing in proportion to the diminution of their numbers. A council of war was held, which decided on retreat, subject to the approbation of the British Cabinet, a resolution the latter did not hesitate to confirm, lest, in addition to the loss of the campaign, they might also have to deplore that of the whole army. Hence the expedition at once commenced its retreat, and before long the English troops evacuated the Belgian territory and even the Isle of Walcheren, which had become the final resting-place of some of their best soldiers.

Napoleon at first refused to believe in the surrender of Flushing, which he had so often declared to be 'impregnable.' When he could no longer doubt the truth, he unhesitatingly attributed it to the 'cowardice and treachery' of General Monnet. Before he even received any information as to the conduct of this officer, he ordered Clarke to have articles on his cowardice published in the papers, also stating the terrible punishment reserved for commandants of fortresses who incurred such dishonour.[1] The violence of the tone adopted has naturally thrown suspicion on the sentence pronounced by the commission of inquiry which Napoleon instituted on this subject. Monnet, in fact, was tried and condemned to death in his absence by a military commission, which was more careful to cast the misfortune that had befallen our arms on the victim that was pointed out to them than to throw any blame on the detestable policy which was its principal cause.[2]

From the instant that Napoleon felt the danger was becoming less pressing, and that the English by their

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, September 2, 1809.

[2] The reports of the commanders of the English expedition are at variance in many essential points with the conclusion drawn by the commission of inquiry, notably as to the number of the garrison. Compare the *Moniteur* of the 8th December 1809 with the State Papers.

dilatoriness were sure to fail in their object, he began to return, as Cambacérès had foreseen, to his real character. The instinctive distrust peculiar to the despot, which made him above all else a lover of silence, of immobility, and of passive obedience, regained its ascendency over his judgment as a man of action. He considered that after all they had made too much noise about a trifle, that Fouché had gone too far, and that, as he expressed it, 'so much bustle and effervescence was quite unnecessary.'[1] What was the use of multiplying levies and spreading them along the departments of the coast? Why send the national guards travelling post-haste? Did it not needlessly alarm the people? Before long this impatience changed to ill-humour, and his ill-humour into distrust both against Fouché and Bernadotte, and when he had no further cause to doubt of the retreat of the English, he did not hesitate to withdraw the command from an auxiliary whom he no longer wanted. A month had scarcely elapsed since he had confided it to him, but he now reproached Bernadotte for his correspondence with 'the intriguers of Paris,' and for a fresh order of the day in which the marshal had boasted that he had not had more than 15,000 men at Antwerp, to hold the place against the English.[2]

Whether these reproaches were very sincere is a point that can be settled by referring to Napoleon's own testimony. On the 8th of October following he wrote to Bessières, 'I have no reason to be discontented with the Prince of Ponte Corvo, but I have not judged it wise to leave a man of such unsteady opinions at the head of such large forces.' Bernadotte, therefore, first received an order to travel, then the offer of a command in Catalonia, which he refused, and finally, in consequence of an explanation with Napoleon in which vehement language was used, he was appointed to the government of Rome with a salary of two million francs; a result which proves clearly enough that it was safer for him to make himself feared than to perform services for the Emperor. This appointment,

[1] Napoleon to Cambacérès, September 1, 1809.
[2] Napoleon to Clarke, September 11, 1809.

however, was almost immediately withdrawn from him. As to Fouché, from the instant that the English appeared to be rendered powerless, he was nothing but a busybody and an agitator who wished 'to set France on fire, and created a feeling of uncertainty by his eternal levies. . . . What could he possibly want to do with them?'[1] His zeal very much resembled treason, and this suspicious and dangerous servant would before long receive his reward.

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, September 26, 1809.

CHAPTER VI

THE PEACE OF VIENNA—THE DIVORCE AND AUSTRIAN MARRIAGE—ANNEXATION OF THE PAPAL STATES TO THE EMPIRE—NAPOLEON'S PROJECTS RESPECTING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

(*July* 1809–*May* 1810)

THE negotiations commenced at Altenburg between Napoleon and the Emperor Francis, after the armistice of Znaïm, had remained almost stationary while the issue of events in Spain and Belgium was still uncertain. Every one, in fact, felt that these three contests, although fought out at such great distances, formed in reality but one combined whole, and that if a battle were lost on the Tagus or the Scheldt all the advantages gained on the Danube would be seriously compromised. Never was there a truer illustration of the celebrated saying that, 'Although diplomatists draw up treaties, it is generals who make them.'[1] Up to the moment when the news arrived of the decided check given to Wellington's campaign in the valley of the Tagus and the failure of the English in their attempt on Antwerp, the conferences of Altenburg were nothing but a kind of diplomatic skirmish in which both sides were fencing rather to gain time than to ascertain the true intentions of their adversary. Napoleon laid down the principle of the *uti possidetis*, which consisted in considering all the territory occupied by our troops, with its nine million inhabitants, as an already acquired possession, destined to serve in the negotiations as a basis of exchange

[1] Speech of M. Thiers on the negotiations with Prussia, 1871.

for such portions of the Imperial domain as Austria might prefer to give up. Such pretensions were inadmissible, and the Austrian negotiators answered by the principle of the integrity of the Empire and the offer of a purely pecuniary indemnity, although they well knew this was a proposal that had no chance of acceptance by a conqueror so exacting as Napoleon.[1]

In reality the Emperor had very promptly made up his mind what concessions he would demand from Austria, and it is not difficult to disentangle them from the diplomatic feints beneath which he at first disguised them. On his Italian frontier he wished for a portion of territory which would enable him to establish communications by land between Venetia and his possessions in Dalmatia, that is to say, Carinthia, Carniola, and that part of Croatia which borders the Adriatic as far as Dalmatia; on the Inn, to advance the Bavarian frontier as close as possible to Vienna; while in Galicia, under pretext of rounding off and strengthening the kingdom of Saxony, which was his handiwork, he wanted to increase the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, that served as a keystone for the reconstruction of Poland. But to gain this last point he had to deceive Russia, whose suspicions were justly aroused, and towards whom he was bound by the most formal engagements. There was the greatest danger in disowning these engagements, for this was not a question to be settled merely with the Emperor Alexander, personally favourable to the Poles, but with the whole Russian nation, whom the very name alone of Poland lashed into fury. If the Czar were to act in opposition to a national hatred of so powerful a nature, he would certainly endanger his crown, nay even his life. Most characteristic it truly was, that so long as the war with Russia had lasted Napoleon refused to do anything whatever for Poland, although he could then have attempted it with impunity, if not advantage. It was since he had formally promised not to think of it that the temptation had taken possession of his mind, and that, underhand, he encouraged the Polish

[1] See Napoleon's letters to M. de Champagny, from July 24 to August 19, 1809.

patriots. This was known at St. Petersburg, where no opportunity was omitted of cautioning him against such designs, and warning him that they would put an end to the alliance. It was the constant subject of discourse between the Czar and Caulaincourt, our ambassador; and particularly when the conferences at Altenburg were commencing, Alexander renewed his caution in the most unequivocal language. He had been invited to send a representative to the negotiations, but, foreseeing that this might lead to his being made to accept responsibility for acts he could not approve of, he preferred leaving Napoleon to decide in the common interests of the two powers. But he again advised him in the most especial manner not to touch the Polish question. 'My interests are in your Majesty's hands,' he wrote to him on the 21st August 1809. 'I like to place entire confidence in your friendship for me. You can give me a certain proof of it by remembering what I so often repeated to you at Tilsit and at Erfurt with regard to the affairs of what was formerly Poland, and which I have since desired your ambassador to repeat to you.'

The court of Austria was perfectly aware that this was dangerous ground for us; and for this reason they tried in every way to entice Napoleon on to it. His keen penetrating eye saw the snare clearly, but could not, nevertheless, resist yielding to the attraction of the forbidden fruit. He foresaw that Austria would use the grievance at St. Petersburg against him, in order to impede the negotiations. The dangerous names of Galicia and Poland therefore should not be pronounced by him, so long as he could postpone it; then, at the last moment, he would abruptly impose his will upon the repugnance of Russia, by an 'accomplished fact,' alleging as a pretext the moral impossibility of abandoning to the vengeance of the Austrians those Poles who had exposed themselves for our cause. Up to that period it would be necessary to deceive Russia, and to prevent his being prematurely accused of having designs himself upon Galicia. With this view he insisted on a detailed protocol of the conference being

kept, a proposal which to the highest degree excited the discontent of Metternich and Nugent, the two negotiators on whom the painful task had devolved of disputing with him the shreds of the Austrian monarchy. It is difficult to understand how it came to pass that the anxiety of the court of Vienna to push him into this dangerous path did not make Napoleon retire before concluding a transaction which could not fail to end fatally by war with Russia. But it is undeniable that he acted knowingly—forewarned and thoroughly well informed on the subject. 'Tell Caulaincourt distinctly,' he wrote to Champagny on the 24th August, 'that he must request M. Romanzoff not to let himself be misled by any insinuations from Austria, and to assure him that the word Galicia has not been pronounced, *that we do not wish to pronounce it, although it is clear that the Austrians are endeavouring to find some way of commencing proceedings by that question.*'[1]

Yet he did wish it, in spite of these reassuring protests. Not being able, however, to avow his projects without seriously compromising the issue of the negotiations, he took a circuitous route. The Austrian negotiators being, moreover, in dismay and obstinately silent, he had little by little to relent in his first demands. He gave them to understand that if Austria consented to sacrifices equivalent to those she had made at the peace of Presburg, he, on his side, would willingly accept a medium course between such sacrifices and the basis of the *uti possidetis*, that is to say, the cession of four or five million of inhabitants, instead of the nine millions he had at first demanded. He then induced them to admit the principle that this cession might take place, first on the Italian frontier and afterwards in Upper Austria. Arrived at that point, but not yet wishing to speak of Galicia, although proposing to increase Saxony, he demanded the annexation of three Bohemian districts to the latter kingdom, convinced that the Emperor Francis would, of his own accord, offer to substitute for them a portion of Galicia, which, being a late acquisition, he could not value so much as one of the

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, August 24, 1809.

older possessions of the monarchy. In exchange for these various cessions, he would, he said, restore Vienna, with the districts of Brunn and Znaïm, besides all Lower Austria and Styria.[1] This was a clear announcement that he had other claims still to put forward; for our troops and those of our ally, Russia, occupied not only all those provinces, but nearly half of Galicia, which as yet there had been no question of restoring. On this point Champagny was to declare that 'those countries would become the subject of special discussion, and form a separate *uti possidetis*.'

The court of Austria, crushed down though it was by the harsh conditions imposed upon it by its conqueror, must have felt the keenest satisfaction when it perceived that at length, after so much hesitation, he was furtively stretching out his hand towards the prey he so ardently coveted. The Emperor Francis suddenly became more communicative than he had ever been. He sent his aide-de-camp, M. de Bubna, to Napoleon, pretending to cast the blame of the dilatoriness of the negotiations at Altenburg on Metternich's love of form, and to say that they could come to an understanding much more quickly without the help of the diplomatists. Napoleon received Bubna with a courtesy not free from familiarity, and took the trouble to display all those feline graces to which—thanks to his flatterers—he now attributed a sort of power of fascination; in short, during the course of the interview, he went so far as to pull his moustache, which was looked upon as a most especial favour. He pretended to open his mind to him completely, and to keep no secrets from him. He only asked to live at peace with Austria, in no way wished to dismember it, but was forced to take precautions in order to guard against the weakness of the Emperor Francis, who had become the instrument of England, and who 'was always of the opinion of the last person that spoke to him.' If Austria had had a sovereign whom he could have trusted, as for instance the grand-duke of Würzburg, the former grand-duke of Tuscany and brother of the present

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, letter of August 15 to September 4.

Emperor, Napoleon declared that he would have been quite ready to restore all the territory he now occupied. Bubna, however, instantly replying that if this were the case the Emperor would have no hesitation in abdicating, Napoleon affected not to believe him. He saw clearly, he said, that they wanted to force him to recommence the war, and to shed more blood, but in that event, he would not retire until he had separated the three crowns. If they desired peace, they must prove it by resigning themselves to make all indispensable concessions. He insisted on the necessity of obtaining guarantees from a sovereign from whom he had experienced ingratitude, and whose interests, moreover, were so much opposed to his own. 'Your master and I,' said he, with that flippancy which he mistook for military candour, 'are like two bulls who wish to mate with Germany and Italy.'[1] He also impatiently repulsed Bubna's demand regarding the restitution of the Tyrol to the house of Austria, but he sensibly diminished his pretensions by declaring himself ready to accept a sacrifice like that of Presburg, in other words by not exacting more than about 3,500,000 inhabitants.

After his interview with Bubna, Napoleon determined to take the decisive step. The final check of the Antwerp expedition and Wellington's retreat to Portugal were then known to be beyond doubt. Austria had no further succour to expect from any one; she ought therefore to resign herself to finish matters, and the personal advances made by the Emperor Francis to Napoleon seemed to indicate a disposition of the kind. On the other hand, our successes, although incontestable, were not of the same overwhelming character as at other previous periods. In Austria, a more than doubtful battle at Essling, and another hotly disputed at Wagram; in Spain, a battle lost at Talavera; in Holland, a blow parried, owing more to the incapacity of our adversary than to any merit of ours,—all these were not advantages which allowed us to make much abuse of victory. It was essential, therefore, to diminish our pretensions to the lowest, and to dictate

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, September 10, 1809.

peace as quickly as possible. Napoleon, it is true, seemed to understand the necessity of concluding it promptly, but less with a view to hasten peace than to prevent Russia interfering in a treaty which was to be made partly against her. He therefore at last determined to unmask his real views, and on the 15th of September wrote to M. de Champagny 'to press forward the negotiations as much as he could,' and to inform the Austrian diplomatists that, 'in order to put an end quickly to the evils of war which afflicted the people and *especially that good Austrian nation*,' he was ready to conclude it on the basis of a cession of population,—of 1,600,000 souls on the frontiers of the Inn and in Italy, and of 2,000,000 in Galicia, '*to be divided between Saxony and Russia.*'[1]

This pretended *division* was in his view merely intended to pacify the Emperor Alexander, for he reserved for him but one-fifth of the territory which he demanded in Galicia. Under this guise that fatal thought which lurked beneath all his others, and was so pregnant with present and future complications, first saw the light of day. The aggrandisement of the duchy of Warsaw, or of Poland rather, of which there had never been a question hitherto, in itself exceeded all he had claimed on the score of Italy and Bavaria. Such a betrayal, tardy though it was, of his long-concealed desire, at once disclosed the ulterior plans he had in view, and the cause of the dissimulation which he had seen fit to practise at the beginning. The court of Austria took care not to repel a pretension which in reality was very advantageous to it, and made but trifling objections to our demands on the subject of Galicia. It would even, if necessary, have ceded the entire province to us, but vehemently opposed giving us any of the other disputed points on Austrian territory. Now that Napoleon had betrayed himself, it was as much Austria's interest to prolong the discussion as his to shorten it. This calculation by the Austrians, however, did not escape the observation of their sharp-sighted adversary, but it irritated him keenly. With all his genius, Napoleon was too impatient and too

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, September 15, 1809.

imperious to be a good diplomatist. In every negotiation which he conducted personally, although he prepared with consummate art the snares into which he intended his adversaries should fall, he almost invariably allowed them to be seen through before the proper time, thus losing all the benefit of his strategems, and being obliged as a last resource to show the point of the sword. The latter argument, no doubt, was all-powerful, but it added humiliation to defeat, and excited resentment amongst the vanquished that was all the deeper from the first appeal having been made to principles of compromise and equity. In his vexation at having taken a false step, he heaped the most insulting abuse on the Emperor and his counsellors. When writing to Champagny he said: 'I don't know how they can make that prince *speak such nonsense;* the gentlemen of the court of Dotis can have no idea of geography . . . we must let them talk twaddle. . . . The Emperor does not know what he is saying.'[1]

The aim of all this twaddle was to deprive him of some thousands of subjects, and to gain more time if possible, which was the cleverest plan Austria could adopt. But Napoleon was not the man to let any one take advantage of the false position in which he had placed himself. Diplomacy had become worthless from the moment that he decided on imposing his will at any cost upon his adversary. He therefore abruptly took the negotiations into his own hands, and treated directly with Bubna and Prince John Lichtenstein, the same whom he had so well known how to flatter, caress, and cajole after the battle of Austerlitz. This was equivalent to saying that affairs were to be treated in a military fashion, and that the conferences of Altenburg were henceforward useless. He ostensibly placed his army in strategical positions, held reviews, and inspected the principal posts, and then, having taken these precautions, signified his ultimatum to the two generals. On the Italian frontier he would be satisfied with Carniola; in Carinthia, with the district of Villach; in Croatia, the right bank of the Save as far as Bosnia, and on the frontier

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, September 21 and 22, 1809.

of Bavaria he would give back Linz and keep Salzburg. In all, this amounted to 1,500,000 souls, instead of 1,600,000. In Galicia he would be content with a population of somewhat more than 2,000,000, but also demanded the reduction of the Austrian army by 150,000 men, the exclusion of all foreigners serving in Austria, and a war contribution of 100,000,000 (Sept. 30).

The menacing demonstrations by which he accompanied these demands produced their effect on the court of Dotis, and all dispute with him ceased except as to the amount of the war contribution. Napoleon, however, was obstinate, and his determination not to lower the sum he had originally named seemed likely to prolong the discussion indefinitely, when an incident occurred that was well calculated to affect him strongly and to make him feel the necessity of bringing the negotiations to a conclusion. On the 12th of October 1809, while he was passing his troops in review at Schönbrunn, a young man rushed out from the crowd and tried to approach him. Although instantly driven away, he a second time attempted to get near the Emperor, but his persistence having attracted the attention of the staff, Rapp and Berthier had him arrested and searched, when it was discovered that he carried a long and very sharp knife concealed under his coat. He was a youth of seventeen, almost a child, with a melancholy but mild cast of countenance, son of a poor pastor at Naumburg, and called himself Frederick Staabs. When questioned by the Emperor in presence of Corvisart, he answered with a calmness and assurance that told of most inflexible resolve. Nor could Corvisart detect any irregularity in his pulse. Without the slightest attempt at boasting he declared that he had determined to kill Napoleon, in order to deliver Germany from its oppressor, that he had no confidants or accomplices, but showed neither regret nor repentance. 'I have not been able to see any trace in him either of religious or political fanaticism,' wrote Napoleon to Fouché, when giving him an account of the event on the very day it occurred. It was, therefore, patriotism alone which had moved him to the deed.

This first indication of the implacable passions of 1813 made but a passing impression on Napoleon, and the lesson which such an act of fanaticism contained was lost upon him. It suggested to him no other idea than the necessity of quitting as quickly as possible a residence which had become unwholesome. He saw in it no symptom of the hatred of the nation, nothing but the act of an over-excited individual, and he would willingly have made Staabs pass for a lunatic, had not the lucidity of his mind been so incontestable. However, careful as he was of his personal safety, he was not called upon to overcome any feeling of clemency, to which his heart at all times was a stranger; nor was he capable of comprehending that, having held a conversation with Staabs, he owed him mercy. True greatness is always generous; and entering into a discussion with a vanquished enemy is equivalent to pardoning him.

Being well aware that desperate acts of the sort are contagious, he desired that as little noise as possible should be made about the attempt or its punishment. He ordered Champagny to sign the peace at once, yielding if required on the point of the hundred millions, and Bubna and Lichtenstein consented to the sum of eighty-five millions, subject to its ratification by their court. But Napoleon did not wait for the exchange of ratifications. Adding another trick to the many artifices he had employed during the negotiations, he quitted Vienna on the 15th of October, after loudly proclaiming to every one that peace had been made, although it had not yet been concluded. The long-expected news everywhere excited manifestations of joy, and rendered it impossible for Austria to recede, no matter how great her vexation and disappointment.

The exchange of ratifications took place on the 20th of October, much to the displeasure of the Austrian court, whose interest it was to prolong the discussion. A few days later the French troops evacuated Vienna, after blowing up the inoffensive ramparts; a petty act of reprisal and a useless cruelty, destroying as it did, not a fortification, but a historical souvenir and a promenade dear to the inhabitants; the only object of which could be to punish

them for having dared to stop the king of kings even for the space of two days. The Viennese nevertheless, by the admission of the *Moniteur* itself, had tended our wounded with the utmost care after Wagram, and our staff had warmly thanked them for it in a proclamation which ended by the following words: 'The great Napoleon shall know that you have claims on his kindness!'[1] The gratitude he showed them was by injuring their town; and this summary proceeding reminded the people, who were too apt to forget the fact, that their Emperor was nothing more than the vassal of a most ruthless master.

The peace of Vienna had been purchased by conditions which could leave nothing but humiliation, resentment, and national hatred in their track. However, thanks to our tortuous policy, it excited far more discontent in the nation which had profited by our victory than in that which had been vanquished by us. When the Emperor Alexander learnt the clauses of the treaty relative to Galicia he was wounded to the quick. He read the document in presence of Caulaincourt, our ambassador, without uttering a word; then, taking up from the table an order of the day by which General Prince Gortchakoff was dismissed for having expressed sympathy with Austria, and making Caulaincourt note its recent date in undeniable proof of his fidelity to the alliance, he broke off the interview, not being willing to listen to the justification which the perplexed diplomatist was about to offer.

The violation of the engagements contracted at Tilsit was as flagrant as it was possible to be, and Napoleon in no way deceived himself as to the bad impression it would make at St. Petersburg. But he flattered himself that he would soon dissipate it, either by the advantages which the peace secured to Russia, or by his protestations in favour of maintaining the alliance, or, in short, by the fear he inspired. In his anxiety to right himself at any cost with that court, he resolved that Alexander should receive the reparation simultaneously with the offence, and spontaneously offered him a sort of guarantee for the future. On the same

[1] See the *Moniteur* of July 23, 1809.

day that the treaty was signed at Vienna, the 20th October 1809, Champagny addressed a long apology to M. de Romanzoff on the subject of the Galician cession. He assured him that Napoleon had only consented to it in self-defence, with the view of protecting those men who had sacrificed themselves for him from the vengeance of Austria; that he would take care to repress all revolutionary feeling in the territory given over to Saxony; in fine, 'that he was ready to agree to the extinction of the names of Poland and the Poles, not only from every transaction, but even from history itself.'

Such assurances exceeded all bounds: but want of good faith could not be effaced by want of dignity; hence they in no wise restored Alexander's confidence. He kept his grievance, though for a moment nourishing the hope of gaining some advantage by the guarantee that was offered him. This illusion however soon vanished, and the wound rankled by slow degrees, so that this much-vaunted peace ultimately grew into an almost open quarrel between Russia and ourselves.

While the house of Austria was signing peace with us, numbers were sacrificing their lives for her in one of those provinces which previous wars had detached from the monarchy. The Tyrol—the insurrection of which would have been so useful to Austria, if geographically placed in the heart of the empire instead of being situated in such a peculiar and isolated position—had been neglected subsequently to Lefebvre's first attempt to subdue it, and had been treated like a kind of fortress, the avenues to which alone are occupied and the exits guarded. The termination of the greater operations and the signing of the peace allowed Napoleon to concentrate against this province all the forces requisite to subdue it, and to replace it under the hated yoke of Bavaria. Drouet, Wrede, Vial, and Baraguay d'Hilliers simultaneously penetrated into the country through its northern and southern valleys, with strong columns of troops sufficiently numerous to crush all resistance. Before resuming hostilities Prince Eugène offered the insurgents an amnesty, which for an instant

they seemed inclined to accept. But Hofer, a mystical and ignorant enthusiast led by fanatics who worked upon his credulity and his courage, refused to follow advice sent to him from Vienna, and after some slight hesitation took up arms again. Ere long defeated, and forced to fly to the mountains, he was there seized, in consequence of an informer having betrayed his place of concealment, and ultimately carried off a prisoner to Mantua (January 19, 1810).

Prince Eugène, humane and generous by nature, would have wished to save this bold party chieftain, who had more than once rescued our soldiers, when prisoners, from popular vengeance. Hofer's crime, after all, was only that of patriotism, and he deserved some indulgence at our hands, for it was by such criminals that France had been saved during the Revolution. But inspirations of the kind were complete strangers to a mind like Napoleon's, which ignored any stimulus but calculation. 'My son,' he wrote to Eugène on the 10th February 1810, 'I desired you to send Hofer to Paris; but as he is at Mantua, despatch an order to form a military commission at once, *to try him* and to have him shot on the spot when your order arrives. Let the whole affair be one of four-and-twenty hours.'[1] This order affords a striking evidence of the nature of that imperial justice which could simultaneously prescribe trial, sentence, and execution, without ever offending the independence of the judges. Andrew Hofer was shot at Mantua on the 25th February 1810. Up to the last moment he refused to make the disavowal which his judges requested of him, in order to entitle them to recommend him to mercy and thus relieve their consciences, and he died without showing repentance or weakness—simple, faithful, intrepid, as every one ought to die for his country, leaving the memory amongst his fellow-citizens of a patriot and a hero.[2]

[1] This letter, which is perfectly authentic, is one of those excluded from the *Correspondance* of Napoleon.

[2] See on Hofer's insurrection, the Memoirs of Prince Eugène, vol. vi. and *L'Histoire de la Guerre du Tyrol en* 1809, published in German by Hormayr, one of the leaders of the revolt.

At the same hour in which Hofer was being executed at Mantua, the victim of his attachment to the Austrian monarchy, a grand and solemn reconciliation was taking place between the author of his murder and the monarch who had derived benefit from his self-sacrifice. The Emperor Francis was giving his daughter in marriage to Napoleon, neither the one nor the other apparently suspecting what an evil omen this blood-stain cast upon the contract. But on slight reflection every line of this extraordinary contract seems in some sort written in blood. How many generous lives had been immolated on both sides before such an alliance was possible between the ancient and the modern Cæsar!

An alliance with one of the royal races of Europe had been long contemplated by Napoleon. It was in accordance with all his instincts as restorer of the old *régime;* but events had never yet allowed him to carry it into effect. He had not been able to devote his mind to the subject amid the ever-recurring din of war; moreover, even the unexampled brilliancy of his fortune had not yet thrown everything else into the shade. From the period of the law of divorce, however, the extraordinary facility which he had granted to the rupture of the conjugal tie had been attributed to a secret desire of contracting a second marriage, and Josephine had followed the discussions of the Council of State with the most painful interest and anxiety. More than once the courtiers, always seeking to divine the wishes of their master, had, by their indiscreet foresight, anticipated his project of divorce from Josephine. He had not dared to breathe his secret until at Erfurt, when he sounded Alexander on the possibility of a marriage with the Grand-Duchess Catherine, one of the Czar's sisters. Alexander, while pretending to be personally well disposed to the project, alleged the difficulty of overcoming his mother's resistance, and thus the negotiation dropped. Now, however, radiant with the fresh prestige derived from the peace of Vienna, more powerful apparently than at Erfurt, though less strong in reality, Napoleon had a right to believe that he would no longer be opposed by false

reasons, or flimsy pretexts. He saw around him the thrones of Europe filled by vassals or flatterers; he was certain to see his demand granted or to make them pay dearly for a refusal; his resolve therefore was definitively taken.

What was his dominant idea in this project? Was it pride? or a desire to consolidate his power by gaining an ally amongst the sovereigns of Europe? or could it be, as he boasted, that he sacrificed his personal affections to the State with a view to securing an heir to the Empire? The tie which bound Napoleon to Josephine had long ceased to be more than an attachment in which habit had as great a share as tenderness, and which was subject to great variation. Before it was broken by divorce, how often had it not been dissolved by caprice? The merit of a sacrifice might, therefore, be questioned, which consisted in substituting a young and handsome wife for an elderly and neglected one. As to those considerations regarding the future which were supposed to suggest the tardy and immoderate desire of leaving an heir, they generally render a man thoughtful, prudent, and careful of his resources, endowing him with that wisdom which, in the language of our laws, belongs to the 'good father of a family.' It is difficult, however, to avoid noticing how absent all such ideas were from Napoleon's mind up to the very end of his astonishing career. Chimerical though he was on many points, especially in the first conception of his projects, can it be maintained that he ever was so blinded by illusions as to suppose that an empire of such unlimited extent could be held together by any one but himself? Were not notions of duration, of consolidation, of perpetuity, incompatible with the audacity and restlessness of this incorrigible gambler, ever ready to stake his fortune on the cast of a die? All his life long he had been dreaming of the glory of Alexander and of the dazzling applause of the world, never of the severe, patient, laborious career of those who are true founders of empires. A marriage with the daughter of a royal race was, however, the natural sequence of that monarchical system, the manners, ceremonial, and even

the prejudices of which he had so carefully revived. There was only one thing which he could not borrow from the past, one which he found beyond his reach, and that was hereditary *prestige*. He had thought to supply its deficiency by talking on every occasion of 'his predecessor Charlemagne,' but no one looked upon this Carlovingian relationship in a serious light. He flattered himself, however, that he might obtain more success by decorating himself with the recollections of an ancient dynasty. It is therefore allowable to believe that, while taking into account the reassuring effect which such an act would produce on the public mind by the mere fact that it held out a prospect of more sober views, of wiser and more pacific dispositions, his principal motive above all others was to efface from himself the last stigma of the revolutionist and upstart, to treat as an equal with sovereigns by the grace of God, and to humble the old dynasties, hitherto so disdainful, by depriving them of their one remaining consolation,—the pride of birth and race. Besides, the impatience and excessive susceptibility which Napoleon displayed in the negotiations relative to his second marriage soon showed that vanity had a larger share in his determination than the wise considerations with which he has been honoured.

On the 20th of October 1809 he arrived at Fontainebleau, as likewise his court, whom he had appointed to meet him there, and he instantly divulged the project which occupied his thoughts to his confidant Cambacérès. That prudent personage was struck by the tone of majestic haughtiness and sovereign assurance which the Emperor adopted while informing him of his views. 'Napoleon,' wrote he, 'has the air of promenading in the midst of his glory;'[1] and the image well pictures the change which mad conceit—very comprehensible after such great success—had wrought in his manners, hitherto more abrupt and restless than precise and solemn. Cambacérès had too much sense, and knew his master too well, not to understand that an alliance with the old dynasties, far from rendering

[1] This expression is used by Cambacérès in his inedited Memoirs, cited by M. Thiers.

him more moderate, would only bring his intoxication, already dangerous enough, to a climax. But the very confidence which was shown to him sufficiently proves that the Arch-chancellor never compromised himself by inopportune counsels. He limited his remarks to a timid reference to Josephine's popularity and the danger of indisposing the nation by raising fears of a restoration of the old *régime.* But the instant he perceived that the Emperor had adopted a fixed resolve, he undertook, as he ever did, to prepare the way and smooth down the difficulties.

The Empress Josephine, after having long dreaded the misfortune now about to befall her, had, from the fact of seeing it postponed, ended by no longer believing it would take place. During many years the possibility of a divorce had formed the preoccupation and torment of her life; but she had regained tranquillity and confidence just as the event was on the eve of happening. Nothing had been done to prepare her for it. The letter in which Napoleon told her of his approaching arrival at Fontainebleau still exists. Its tone is more affectionate than ever, as though he wished to keep up her illusions till the very moment he should have to strike the painful blow. '*I am feasting on the thought of seeing thee again,*' he wrote to her from Nymphenburg on October 21, 'I embrace thee. Ever thine.'[1] At Fontainebleau, however, she was struck by his tone of constraint and coldness, and by the triumphant airs of her sworn enemies, his brothers and sisters, who had rushed thither to meet him; some to do him homage, others to revive his favour, which was weakened by so long an absence.

One significant fact soon increased the anxiety which she was obliged to conceal beneath a smiling countenance, amid the daily *fêtes* of the court at Fontainebleau—namely, that the communication between her apartment and that of the Emperor had been closed up, as if to announce to her that there was an end to all former intimacy.[2] The court quitted Fontainebleau to return to Paris on the 25th of

[1] Napoleon to Josephine, October 21, 1809.
[2] Bausset: *Mémoires d'un Préfet du Palais.*

October. All those sovereigns who had submitted to Napoleon's power and were his faithful satellites had been convoked thither by invitations that were only so many veiled orders. Rumours of divorce became then so rife that the unfortunate Josephine could no longer doubt the fate awaiting her. On the evening of November 30, the prefect of the palace was on duty in an apartment adjoining the drawing-room where the Emperor and Josephine were sitting, when he heard piercing cries, and with amazement recognised the voice of the Empress. A few moments afterwards the door opened, and, Napoleon having called him in, he beheld the Empress suffering from a violent nervous attack, and uttering exclamations of distress and despair. Then, helping Napoleon to carry her into her own apartment and to attend on her for a while, he had an opportunity of noticing that, although her grief might be real, the swoon at least had been feigned.[1]

In fact the much-dreaded explosion had taken place. The Emperor had at first determined to await the arrival of Prince Eugène in Paris, in order that the presence and consolations of the son whom Josephine so tenderly loved might soften the bitterness of his intended communication; but in a moment of impatience and harshness he had let his secret escape. When he announced the terrible news to her who alone was ignorant of it, to the woman who, by having brought him amongst her wedding presents the chief command of the army in Italy, had so eminently contributed towards his exalted fortune, eight days had already elapsed since he had desired Champagny to ask for him the hand of the Emperor Alexander's sister. It was Russia, his ally, not Austria, whom he thought it better to address first. Either this latter power seemed to him to have been too cruelly treated to be moved by any desire for a family union, or a refusal appeared less likely on the part of Alexander, or, in fine, he thought, and thought rightly, that it was more dangerous to wound so formidable a sovereign than to add one more cause of displeasure to the misfortunes of a monarchy now weak and vanquished. On the 22d of

[1] Bausset: *Mémoires d'un Préfet du Palais.*

November Champagny wrote to Caulaincourt that the Emperor Alexander had told Napoleon at Erfurt 'that his sister the Princess Anne *was at his disposal*;' an extraordinary alteration in a proposal which had not emanated from Russia but from us, and was now suggested by Napoleon with the view of making a refusal more difficult. Caulaincourt therefore was to broach the question simply and frankly to the Emperor Alexander, and to tell him 'that the Emperor, *urged on by the whole of France*, was preparing for a divorce. Could he calculate upon the Czar's sister? Let his Majesty think it over for two days, and answer frankly, not as if he were addressing the ambassador of France, but a person passionately devoted to both families.'[1]

The affair was neither so simple nor so easy as those in Paris pretended to think, especially since they had so deeply wounded the national sentiment of the Russians by again, in so vexatious a manner, bringing up the menacing spectre of Poland before their eyes. As to any difficulties to which the divorce might give rise, they were not of a nature to disquiet Napoleon's sense of omnipotence. The Arch-chancellor had pointed out the course to be followed. The dissolution of the civil tie was easily obtainable, for, according to the Code, mutual consent was sufficient to entitle any two people to a divorce. No doubt there was a clause of a certain decree which prohibited divorce to the members of the imperial family.[2] But although the Emperor thought fit that this article should be applied to his brother King Louis, whose conjugal misfortunes were so well known, he in no wise intended to submit to it himself. Moreover, who would dare to invoke it against him? On the other hand, however, the dissolution of the religious tie presented more than one obstacle, for it depended on the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. At the period of the coronation, with the view of dissipating Josephine's fears and of appeasing the Pope's scruples, Napoleon had consented, at the request

[1] Champagny's despatch to Caulaincourt, November 22, 1809. *Archives des Affaires Etrangères: Russie*, 149.

[2] Decree of March 30, 1808, Art. vii.

of his uncle, Cardinal Fesch, secretly to go through the religious marriage ceremony, and the benediction had been given by the cardinal himself in one of the apartments of the Tuileries. The Catholic Church does not permit divorce, or at least she has not tolerated it except in very rare cases, in lieu of certain favours for which she paid dear as she bought them at the cost of consideration. It was necessary, therefore, to get the religious marriage pronounced null and void, a matter that in fact would be equivalent to a divorce. But the competent authority in everything regarding sovereigns was the Pope, and the Pope was Napoleon's prisoner; no complaisance, therefore, could be expected from him. Here, however, the wise and wary lawyer again undertook to unravel the difficulty by sure and discreet methods, as a too abrupt proceeding might have caused both scandal and danger.

As the sad scene which had revealed the domestic trouble in the imperial family was soon publicly known, the divorce became the subject of conversation at the court and in town. The unfortunate Josephine was supported, it is true, by the affection of her children, who felt the blow scarcely less keenly than herself; but being convinced of the absolute futility of resistance, she had, after the deepest anguish, submitted rather than resigned herself to that strong will which henceforward became inflexible. In order to feign consent, it was necessary that she should show herself in public. Hence she was dragged about to all the grand official receptions, and the scandal-loving public watched her closely, in order to note the extent and progress of her misfortune. The echoes of the palace more than once repeated her sobs and complaints; but it was desirable that this victim to pride and policy should appear content to sacrifice herself, and she was not allowed the satisfaction even of a display of grief. In the *fêtes* given at the commencement of December, to celebrate the anniversary of the coronation, Paris beheld her, with death in her heart and a smile on her lips, bearing the despair which was a torture to her, with grace, playing her part of sovereign for the last time, surrounded by her children, who, to

use the expression of a contemporary, were dancing at their mother's funeral.

On the 15th of December 1809, at a family council consisting of all the members of the imperial family then in Paris, Napoleon read a declaration intended to make known the determination he had taken to separate from Josephine: 'The policy of his kingdom, the interests and needs of his people, required that he should leave children after him, heirs of his love for them,—the throne upon which Providence had placed him. For many years past he had abandoned all hope of having children by his beloved spouse. This was the cause then which induced him to sacrifice the tenderest affections of his heart, to hearken only to the good of the State and to desire the dissolution of their marriage. . . .' When Josephine rose in her turn to read the declaration, which had been handed to her ready drawn up, announcing a consent that was so little in accordance with her true sentiments, sobs impeded her utterance. She found it impossible, despite every effort, to articulate one single sentence of this studied part, her convulsions of grief were alone visible, and, for a moment the real truth overpowered the official falsehoods. Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angély, taking the paper from Josephine's trembling hands, read aloud the document which under conventional phrases disguised the tortures of a spirit wounded to the point of death by humiliation, regret, and despair. Next day, December 16, the official report of this double declaration was presented to the Senate with the senatus-consultum destined to legalise the dissolution of the marriage. This senatus-consultum declared that the marriage contracted between Napoleon and Josephine was dissolved, and fixed an annual revenue of two million francs from the State Treasury as the jointure of the divorced Empress, who preserved her title and rank, the Emperor adding one million to this annual income from the funds of the civil list.

Prince Eugène, who cruelly felt the blow levelled at his mother, in addition to the loss of his hopes of the throne of Italy, was forced to come to the Senate, and not only

testify to the gratitude of his family, but, what almost surpasses belief, to speak of 'the satisfaction and pride with which his mother would witness all the happy results which her sacrifices would produce for the country and the Emperor.' Regnault, in a plaintive speech, described Josephine as 'sacrificing her tenderness for the best of husbands, through devotion to the best of kings, and attachment to the best of nations;' he adjured the senators 'to accept, in the name of France, so deeply touched by it, and in sight of astonished Europe, this sacrifice, which was *the greatest that ever had been made on earth!*'[1] Such hyperbole rendered adulation difficult to those who had to speak after him. Lacépède, whose emotion did not cause him to lose his presence of mind, preferred to offer incense to the sacrificer rather than to the victim. He begged the Senate to note, as 'well worthy of remark, that amongst the thirteen kings of France whose duties as sovereigns had constrained them to dissolve the ties which bound them to their consorts, four of the most admired and cherished monarchs might be counted—Charlemagne, Philip Augustus, Louis XII., and Henry IV.' Thanks to this mode of interpreting history, no matter what Napoleon might do hereafter, he would henceforward always resemble a great man, and divorce was only one additional perfection from the moment that it was he who desired it. Consequently, at the termination of these two speeches the senatus-consultum was passed by eighty votes against seven.

The dissolution of the religious tie was next demanded from the diocesan episcopal court. It at first excited scruples amongst the members of that ecclesiastical tribunal, and they would gladly have refused had the choice been left to them. They alleged, apparently not without reason, that although competent to decide in cases of private individuals, they had no power with regard to sovereigns, and that long usage had reserved such special jurisdiction to the Pope. Cambacérès, ever subtle, replied that the intervention of the Pope might perhaps be necessary to

[1] Sitting of the *Sénat Conservateur* on November 16, 1809. *Archives parlementaires.*

dissolve a regular marriage, but that it was quite unnecessary to declare the nullity of one in which no rule had been observed, and where there had been neither witnesses, nor a proper priest, nor even proper consent. In short, said the imperial petition, supported by the testimony of Duroc, of Talleyrand, and of Berthier, the Emperor had only feigned consent, with the view of pacifying Josephine and tranquillising the conscience of the Pope; but he had never seriously consented, for he had even at that period the certainty of being obliged to contract a second marriage. In other words, he had deceived at one and the same moment, Josephine, Cardinal Fesch, and the Pope![1]

Cambacérès, however, did not refuse to calm the timorous consciences of the episcopal officials. He brought them the declaration of a committee of seven bishops, certifying that the episcopal tribunal was competent to settle the question. Its members then began a pretended examination into the reasons alleged by the Emperor in favour of annulling the marriage. The argument deduced from the absence of witnesses and of a proper priest—namely, the parish priest—would have had great weight but for Cardinal Fesch's declaration, made with a frankness bordering on courage, that the Pope, on account of the circumstances, had expressly dispensed him from following the ordinary forms—a fact most embarrassing to Catholic consciences. It was therefore the defective consent of the Emperor, the species of moral violence to which this singular minor had been subjected—that is to say, in reality the deliberate deceit of which Josephine had been the victim on the part of her husband—upon which the pleaders were obliged to insist. But the argument upon which they most relied, and which had the greatest weight with the unfortunate judges, was the unlimited power and known character of the terrible chief under whom they served. The episcopal tribunal did not pretend to more virtue than Pius VII. had himself shown on another occasion, and only asked to have a pretext for submission.

[1] See Thiers, D'Haussonville, the Abbé Lyonnet: *Vie du Cardinal Fesch.*

Consequently they annulled the religious marriage, and the metropolitan tribunal hastened to confirm the sentence (January 1809).

Josephine, who suffered solitude in the very midst of the court at the Tuileries before the details of her repudiation were finally settled, buried her grief at Malmaison, where she ended her days a few years later, alone and neglected. Napoleon withdrew to the Trianon for a week's hunting, in order to mark the separation which was commencing. The negotiations with St. Petersburg for the conclusion of a marriage had not ceased for a moment. On the 28th of December 1809 Caulaincourt had made the overture to the Emperor which Champagny had desired him to make. Alexander, taken by surprise by so utterly unexpected a request, was still completely absorbed in apprehensions as to the restoration of Poland provoked by the recent cessions in Galicia—cessions which had excited the liveliest and most deep-seated irritation throughout the whole Russian nation. Under the influence of these fears, and smarting from the reproaches which were openly enough addressed to him by public opinion, then much more free in Russia than in France, he had received, with an eagerness easy to understand, the unhoped-for offer made to him by Napoleon on the preceding 20th of October to join him in effacing all old recollections, 'in making the name of Poland and the Poles disappear not only from every political transaction but even from history.' If he could only succeed in making it disappear from the *Moniteur*, where it figured daily, the concession would not be unimportant.

Knowing the character of his ally, and desirous that such a promise should not remain a dead letter, he immediately occupied himself in arranging the draft of a convention intended to possess the force of law. This draft was formed on the following bases: (1) A reciprocal engagement never to allow the restoration of Poland; (2) Suppression of the names of Poland and the Poles in all public and private documents; (3) Suppression of the ancient orders of Poland and of all self-government in the Duchy of Warsaw. It was precisely at the moment when

the Emperor and his counsellors were engaged in discussing the terms of this convention with Caulaincourt, that the demand of marriage was made, apprising them of the price which Napoleon intended to place on his abandonment of Poland; for it was difficult to believe that chance alone had united two such different proposals.

To give an idea of the sentiments with which Napoleon's demand must have inspired Alexander, it is sufficient to say that the Czar had thoroughly mastered the character of his ally. His private opinion, therefore, was very far removed from the commonplace or official admiration which he considered it necessary to profess for him. Not only had he had frequent personal relations with him, quite sufficient for the appreciation of all minor shades of character, but he had been able to test him in peace and war, in small and great affairs. Alexander, whose only fault amongst many noble and generous qualities was a marked tendency to cunning, though a keen observer, was also a just one. Conversations with him still exist, dating from this period (November and December 1809), noted down from day to day by his interlocutor, Prince Adam Czartoryski, from which it is easy to glean his opinion of Napoleon. While expressing it with the utmost calmness and reserve, he manifested excessive mistrust of him. He declared that he 'was a man who considered any means legitimate, provided he attained his object, and who did everything by calculation, even to his outbreaks of passion.' He affirmed that he held proofs in his hand that at the very time when Napoleon was proposing to him to efface the names of Poland and the Poles, and was making similar declarations to the legislative body through M. de Montalivet, he was sending assurances to the Poles that these were nothing but pretences intended to deceive their common enemies. In short, his dominant sentiment regarding Napoleon was precisely that with which a formidable and perverse power would inspire a character naturally kind, namely, a feeling of aversion mingled with fear.[1]

[1] *Alexander Ier et le prince Czartoryski: correspondance et conversations* (dated December 26, 1809).

Such dispositions, however, might be considered amicable compared to those which then animated the court and nation towards us, in consequence of the encouragement given to Poland, and the vexations caused by the continental blockade. Alexander, therefore, could not fail to be very disagreeably surprised by the unexpected overture made to him by Caulaincourt. Too politic and too courteous not to dissimulate his annoyance, he declared that he himself would regard with pleasure an union so well fitted to strengthen the alliance between the two countries. But the decision, he added, did not rest with him alone. A special ukase of the Emperor Paul, his father, had given the Empress-mother exclusive power over her daughters; he would therefore endeavour to obtain her consent, but to spare the Emperor's feelings would speak of his request only as a matter possible though uncertain.[1]

His mother's sentiments respecting Napoleon were long since known to him. It was for the purpose of escaping from the first offer of marriage that, after Erfurt, the Empress-mother had so anxiously hurried on the marriage of the Grand-Duchess Catherine to the duke of Oldenburg, although that alliance was far from brilliant. Alexander therefore could have had no misgivings as to the result of his inquiry; but he wished, on the one hand, to convince Napoleon that he had done everything to obtain success; on the other, he was most anxious, under every contingency, to conclude the convention which had been promised relative to Poland, and for which it was intended to exact so dear and novel a ransom. On his side, Caulaincourt had received authority from Champagny to sign everything he might be asked for on the subject of the Poles, but at the same time to reserve the ratification for Napoleon, a precaution as significant as it was uncommon. In his desire to bring the negotiation for the marriage to a successful conclusion, our ambassador might very naturally entertain an exaggerated idea of the influence which the convention would exercise on the happy issue of the proposal of marriage. On the 4th of January 1810, just when

[1] Bignon. Caulaincourt's despatch is not in the Archives.

Alexander was beginning to give him hopes of inducing his mother to yield, Caulaincourt signed the convention relative to Poland, persuaded that so important a concession on our part would at once decide the marriage question, while the Czar, on the other hand, actuated by a precisely similar calculation, dragged on the communications with his mother, allowing hopes of the marriage to be entertained, in expectation that Napoleon would ratify the treaty.

Matters had reached this point when, on the 10th of January 1809, Caulaincourt received an order to demand a categorical answer within ten days. This ultimatum, truly extraordinary in such circumstances, has hitherto been attributed to the impatience and irritation which Napoleon felt at the dilatoriness of the court of Russia. But a simple examination of the dates will suffice to prove how groundless is this supposition. The Emperor Alexander had been absent from St. Petersburg up to the 27th of December, a fact confirmed by the *Moniteur*[1] itself, and it was not until the 28th that he had cognisance of the request expressed by Napoleon. Caulaincourt transmitted his answer on the same day, but as the couriers then took from fifteen to twenty days to get from St. Petersburg to Paris, it was physically impossible that Napoleon could have known the contents of Caulaincourt's despatch when he gave that diplomatist orders to act, on the 10th of January 1810, in a manner which, on the part of the ambassador of France towards the Emperor Alexander, was not only singular but almost offensive. Thus by a remarkable coincidence it happened that at the very moment when Caulaincourt was asking Alexander for the hand of the grand-duchess, Napoleon was definitively renouncing that project of alliance, for he was too clear-sighted not to see that a rupture would be the inevitable result of so unseemly an ultimatum.[2]

[1] *Moniteur* of January 21, 1810.

[2] The documents relative to Napoleon's second marriage have for the most part disappeared from the archives of the Foreign Office, but if it were possible to doubt that Napoleon's change with regard to Russia took place about the end of December 1809, proof of it is to be found in a letter dated December 31, addressed to Alexander, and

What could have happened, then, that was capable of so abruptly modifying his resolutions? The prospect of a marriage neither more honourable nor advantageous, but from a dynastic point of view more flattering to Napoleon's pride, had presented itself, and he had embraced it with the capricious folly of a spoiled child of fortune, without troubling himself as to the political consequences of so sudden a change.

At the last party at which the Empress Josephine was present in the Tuileries—a short time therefore before the 15th of December, the date of her departure for Malmaison—M. de Floret, a secretary of the Austrian Embassy, in conversation with M. de Sémonville, one of the shrewdest men of the day, expressed his regret that the divorce should terminate in a Russian marriage, while Austria would have been enchanted to give one of her archduchesses to Napoleon. Sémonville feigned surprise, and affected to see nothing but an expression of polite regret in the remark. As M. de Floret, however, insisted that he was in earnest, Sémonville lost no time in mentioning the subject to the Duc de Bassano, who, in his turn, instantly reported it to the Emperor. Napoleon had just received a precisely similar report of the disposition of the court of Vienna from M. de Narbonne, then passing through that capital.[1] He in consequence commissioned the Duc de Bassano to make an offer in that sense, with all possible secrecy, to Prince Schwarzenberg, the Austrian ambassador, and to endeavour to obtain a promise from him without making any engagement himself. M. de Laborde, who had served in Austria during the emigration, and was intimate with Prince Schwarzenberg, was the intermediate agent chosen for this delicate negotiation. He found the prince in

singularly stiff and sullen. One of Champagny's despatches, dated the same day, indicates a thorough change of tone and policy (*Archives des Affaires étrangères: Russie*, 149).

[1] Narbonne's note, the existence of which has been disputed, is a document without date or signature, but evidently belongs to the end of November 1809. The proposal is made by Metternich, who adds, 'This is an idea of mine, but I am certain that the Emperor would be favourable to it' (*Archives des Affaires étrangères: Autriche*, 363).

despair at the Russian marriage, which he regarded as a fresh misfortune for Austria. No sooner, therefore, did M. de Laborde speak, than he seized the proffered opportunity as an unhoped-for piece of good fortune, and wrote off that instant to his court, which was a prey to the same regret and uneasiness with himself.

The project of the Russian marriage was doubtless a very serious and menacing event for the court of Vienna. During the whole course of the negotiations which had preceded the peace, Austria, independently of her very natural anxiety to lighten as much as possible the burdens imposed upon her by defeat, had pursued but one other object, that of irritating Russia against France, and putting an end to an alliance which was an insurmountable obstacle to the restoration of her power. This object she had partly attained by tempting Napoleon's cupidity with the offer of Galicia; but now, when in the act of applauding herself for her work, and seeing with secret joy the evident increase of the misunderstanding between Alexander and Napoleon, an unforeseen event threatens to crush all her hopes. Although it was impossible for true politicians to have any delusions on the advantages of a dynastic alliance in an age of revolution and with a sovereign like Napoleon, still the court of Vienna knew that, for some years at least, the intimacy between the two Emperors would naturally become more close, and the two states having common interests in almost everything, without real or marked opposition in any, there were serious chances that the alliance, instead of being dissolved, would only be strengthened by time. The marriage then would be a finishing stroke for Austria, leaving her no hope of recovering herself for some time to come.

Under these circumstances it is easy to imagine the sentiments with which Prince Schwarzenberg's communication was received at Vienna. He was immediately informed that if the demand to which he alluded were made, it would meet with a favourable answer; and it was evidently on the strength of this assurance that Napoleon ordered that kind of summons to be addressed to Alexander, which if not exactly offensive was far from decorous—requiring

him to give a reply within the space of ten days. Another equally striking proof of his preference for Austria is deducible from the public step he then took, as if to provide himself, in the eyes of Europe, with new arguments in support of the resolution he had adopted. The ultimatum addressed to Alexander allowed him until the 20th of January for his final answer. On the 21st of January—at least a fortnight, that is to say, before he could know what the answer would be—Napoleon assembled a privy council at the Tuileries, composed of all the great dignitaries of the Empire, with the view of submitting to their deliberation the choice that was open to him between these two great alliances. A discussion of the kind, begun at such a moment, was highly offensive to Russia, as she was thereby distinctly given to understand that Napoleon in no way considered himself bound by the demand he had made upon her. An attentive study of the facts and dates proves beyond doubt that Napoleon gave up the Russian marriage at the very time when his ambassador Caulaincourt was making the formal demand to Alexander, and that the privy council in which the question of the alliances was debated was in his eyes merely a means of freeing himself in case the Czar's answer should be favourable.

Napoleon, in fact, understood his councillors too well not to know that the majority would always declare their opinion in the sense he desired. He never decided anything by their advice. It was not counsel which he asked from them on this occasion, but some manifestation which would have the twofold advantage of affording him one of those theatrical effects he so dearly loved, and be at the same time a pretext for disguising under the pretence of state interest a new manœuvre inspired by vanity. The state interest was not doubtful, whatever might be said; it was altogether on the side of Russia. Could the Austrian marriage restore us the friendship of the court of Vienna? How was it possible to believe it after all the successive blows with which we had assailed her, after the wars which had deprived her in a few years of provinces like Lombardy, Venetia, the Tyrol, Suabia, Dalmatia, Illyria, and New

Galicia, not to speak of Belgium, the imperial crown of Germany, or the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, formerly the seat of an Austrian archduke? How could it be supposed that the happiness of giving an archduchess to a hated upstart would atone for losses and grievances like these? In short, this marriage was only an additional sacrifice and humiliation, unless some great political advantage might possibly be gained from it. The melancholy confession of the Emperor Francis at a later period leaves no doubt on this point: 'In order to avert incurable evils,' said he, in his manifesto of August 12, 1813, 'and to secure some pledge of a better future, his Majesty *gave away what was most dear to his heart.*' However, the more humiliating such a calculation might be, the more necessary it was to make Austria forgive us even that. If Napoleon were disposed to make restitution to her of a satisfactory nature, the Austrian alliance might prove a happy event and a guarantee for the peace of Europe,—but nothing was further from his thoughts. The result therefore would be only to transform her from an open into a private enemy, and her intrigues would become all the more dangerous now that her disappointments were more bitter.

The Russian alliance might not unjustly be reproached with encouraging Napoleon in an adventurous policy only too much in character with the tendency of his genius; but the impunity with which he had hitherto exposed himself to this danger showed the security he felt in it, even when Russia only partially seconded him, as in the last campaign. The alliance would give him strength, while it cost him neither restitution nor sacrifice, merely requiring from him the maintenance of the *status quo* on the subject of Poland. It may also be noted that a refusal could not be displeasing to Austria, for no demand having been made, none need be withdrawn; while, on the other hand, a simple withdrawal was offensive to Russia, even were she not disposed to grant Napoleon's request, from the mere fact of his not deferring his decision until the receipt of her answer. To conclude with Russia was to give the finishing blow to

Austria, already crushed; but to conclude with Austria was to break with Russia, still powerful and intact.

No official report of the deliberations of the privy council exists; a blank that need not be much regretted. The majority of the personages who were summoned to give their opinion thoroughly understood the importance of the advice demanded from them. It was generally considered to be nothing but a ceremony intended to make known to the world that the royal houses of Europe were disputing the honour of giving a wife to Napoleon. The two opinions which had most weight were those of Talleyrand and Cambacérès; Talleyrand's was favourable to Austria, that of Cambacérès to Russia. Both were equally well grounded, with the sole difference that the system extolled by Talleyrand, though practicable after Austerlitz by means of the compromises and concessions which even he then deemed essential, now required many more sacrifices, and a political moderation which it was hopeless to expect from Napoleon. The other opinions were dictated either by complaisance or the personal positions of the speakers. Prince Eugène, pre-eminently occupied with the desire of preserving peace in Italy, and maintaining the integrity of Bavaria—his father-in-law's kingdom—declared in favour of Austria, while Murat, animated by the hostility which the Bonaparte family felt against every Beauharnais, spoke energetically for the Russian marriage in the name of the principles and interests of the Revolution, menaced, as he said, by an union in which the nation beheld a sort of reconciliation with the old *régime*. In short, two votes were given for Russia, five for Austria, and two for a marriage with a Saxon princess, of which there had never been any serious question, and which was only introduced to swell the number. It is usually stated, in the reports of this singular deliberation, that Napoleon limited himself to listening to the opinions expressed, without giving utterance to any himself. King Louis, however, who assisted at the council and voted for the Saxon princess, assures us in his memoirs that Napoleon replied to Murat and declared himself warmly in favour of the Austrian alliance.

On the 10th of January Caulaincourt made known to Alexander the date fixed by Napoleon for his answer. This unreasonable demand, which could only be explained by some secret desire of breaking off the negotiation, was all the more singular that, as must have been well known in Paris, it concerned a young girl barely sixteen years of age. It was impossible to solve in so short a time the very delicate questions connected with the project. It is more than probable that Alexander would never have accepted so unusual an ultimatum had he not been pre-occupied above all other considerations with the desire of ratifying the convention relative to Poland. He therefore endeavoured not to discourage Caulaincourt, though at the same time he carefully avoided making any formal engagement himself. He told him that he had great hopes of overcoming his mother's resistance, but that her scruples and fears must be taken into account. She had lost two daughters from having allowed them to marry when too young. The Grand-Duchess Anne was also still very young; consequently it would be necessary to wait a year or two. The difference of religion was another difficulty. The Empress wished not only that her daughter should not change her religious communion, but that the exercise of the Greek form of worship should under every circumstance be secured to her. She recollected that the Greek Church does not permit marriage with one who is divorced; moreover, the Grand-Duchess had been previously promised to a duke of Coburg. In short, there was no lack either of objections or pretexts, and the time fixed by Napoleon elapsed without the Emperor Alexander being able to transmit to him any answer beyond assurances of kindness and goodwill.

Caulaincourt's despatches announcing that the court of Russia had not yet come to a decision reached Paris on the 6th of February. That very hour Napoleon returned him an answer, stating that he considered himself free as regarded Alexander. And what proves at the same time how much he had counted on such an issue, and how far the negotiations with the court of Vienna had progressed

during the month that he was supposed to be expecting a favourable answer from Russia, is the fact that he was able to have his marriage contract with the Archduchess Marie-Louise drawn up on the very same day, and signed by Prince Schwarzenberg on the next, the 7th of February 1810. The reasons he alleged as his motive for relinquishing the hand of Alexander's sister help to show that his theme was ready prepared for the contingency—very improbable it is true—of his request being granted. 'You shall inform him,' he wrote to Champagny, 'that a council was held a few days since, and that opinions were there divided between the Russian and Austrian princesses; that opinion is divided in France *on account especially of religion* and that even those who attach least importance to religion, cannot accustom themselves to the idea of not seeing the Empress follow the ceremonies of the church in her place beside the Emperor; that the presence of a Greek priest seems a still greater inconvenience, and that *it would be admitting a great inferiority to confirm by treaty his presence at the Tuileries*. . . . The Emperor Alexander had mentioned the extreme youth of the Princess Anne as forbidding any hope of issue to the marriage for two or three years to come, a circumstance which was a serious objection, and would very much thwart the Emperor's views.' Champagny was also to draw attention to the marked contrast between the slowness of Russia and 'the eagerness and cordiality of Austria,' in order, no doubt, that Alexander might learn for certain that negotiations had been going on with that power at the same time as with himself. He should end by declaring that Napoleon considered himself released, 'not from an engagement, as there never had been any, but from the obligation of tacit civility which his friendship for Alexander imposed upon him by the delay of a month in the answer to so simple a question.'[1] A message dated on the following day announced 'that he had decided in *favour of Austria*.'

But his resentment was not allayed by breaking off—though in a style so rude as to be wellnigh insulting—a

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, February 6, 1810.

project which he did not forgive Alexander for having received with coldness, though he himself abandoned it so quickly. He made a point of immediately convincing him that it was in no wise the effect on his part of momentary spite, but a true change of policy, as though he were afraid that Alexander might not be sufficiently sensible of the unseemliness of his proceedings. On the same day, the 6th of February, he notified to Russia his refusal to ratify the convention signed by Caulaincourt, and of which he had himself suggested the conclusion. He who had offered to efface from politics and even from history the names of Poland and the Poles, now deemed it 'contrary to his dignity' to declare 'that the kingdom of Poland should never be restored' (Art. I. of the Convention), and as to the denominations of Poland and the Poles, it was 'absurd and ridiculous' to undertake any engagement to suppress them.[1] He would not even accept the clause abolishing the ancient order of Polish chivalry. He objected to all the other articles of the convention, substituting a project of his own, the ambiguous wording of which gave rise to the most subtle interpretations, though its principal aim was in reality to gainsay and vex a power that was not likely to be long in taking up his challenge.

The Emperor Alexander was too proud to show the slightest annoyance on the question of breaking off the marriage; he even affected to congratulate Caulaincourt on the happy results which this intimacy with Austria would produce upon the peace of Europe. But as he was too clear-sighted to be duped, or blind to the very unsatisfactory kind of defeat inflicted upon him, he observed to our ambassador how impossible it was that the marriage contract could have been signed on the 7th of February, unless negotiations with Vienna had been going on long before that date—in other words, before an answer had reached Paris from St. Petersburg. To have advanced matters up to that point, it was evident that the negotiations must have been begun in the month of December. To this unanswerable observation he added another no less embarrassing.

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, February 6, 1810.

Without expressing his disbelief in the fear expressed of wounding the religious susceptibilities of the French by the presence of a Greek priest at the Tuileries, when urged by the man who had carried off the Pope from Rome, and still held him prisoner at Savona, he merely reminded Caulaincourt of Napoleon's declaration made at the very outset, 'that difference of religion would be no obstacle.' To these reproaches the ambassador could give no satisfactory reply, but limited himself to deploring the dilatoriness which, according to him, had ruined all. Such just grievances were not calculated to facilitate the acceptance of the project which Napoleon had substituted for the Russian convention. Alexander, pointing out with a certain bitterness its equivocal language and words of double meaning, met Napoleon's draft by a new and clearer counter-project, never deceiving himself, however, as to the slight chance there was of its being accepted; and allowed the following remarkable words to escape to Caulaincourt, which prove that he was perfectly aware of the significance of the Austrian alliance. He said, 'It is not I who will disturb the peace of Europe, or who will attack any one; but if they seek me, I shall defend myself.'[1]

While this dark cloud, as yet so imperceptible, but which might easily have been scattered to the winds up to the time when it burst with the thunderbolt of the Russian war, was insensibly gathering on the horizon, Paris was indulging in *fêtes*, demonstrations, and transports of joy, in honour of the great and happy event destined to insure the peace of the world. Peace! This was the meaning it was universally agreed to attach to the marriage, as if to enchain the Emperor by the expression of the public desire. '*She announces serene days to the world*,' seemed to be the inscription of the new Empress's device. The better to mark his metamorphosis from a *parvenu* into a sovereign of the old *régime*, Napoleon desired to copy in everything the ceremonial used at the marriage of Louis XVI. with Marie Antoinette. Not only were the marriage contract and the

[1] Caulaincourt's despatches, from February 12 to 26, and March 8 and 10, 1810 (*Archives des Affaires étrangères: Russie*, 150).

epistolary formulas of the ancient court of France reproduced word for word, but even the smallest minutiæ of etiquette. A commission of the ministry of foreign affairs was especially entrusted with the task of reconstructing this archæological code of gallantry.

Marie-Louise, married at Vienna by the Archduke Charles as proxy for the Emperor Napoleon, was, on the 16th of March, confided to the Queen of Naples, at Braunau. There, conformably to an ancient usage, she was unclothed from head to foot, and then reclad with new garments, as a symbol of the new life on which she was about to enter. At Compiègne, by a somewhat unbecoming infraction of the ceremonial agreed upon, Napoleon passed several nights beneath the same roof as Marie-Louise; but even this derogatory proceeding was but a plagiarism, for he was imitating Henri IV., who, it was said, had acted in the same manner towards Marie de Medicis. On the 2d of April the betrothed made their entry into Paris, amid a cortège of kings and queens, and a crowd of chamberlains, ladies of honour, pages and courtiers of every degree. The most illustrious representatives of the ancient aristocracy fought for the honour of forming part of their suite. A Catholic prelate, a Rohan, had requested to be attached to their 'august persons,' saying that 'The great Napoleon' was his '*tutelary divinity!*'[1]

On every side there was nothing but banquets, illuminations, dances, concerts, and distributions of food to the people. Next day the marriage took place. On the same day and at the same hour each professor of rhetoric in every Lycée of the Empire delivered a Latin discourse on the glories of the event; and in every church each priest had to celebrate and bless it. Upwards of a hundred and fifty poets chanted epithalamiums. The Senate, the Legislative Body and the Council of State outdid themselves in adulations, resembling an apotheosis. And all

[1] Decision, dated February 15, 1810. The following answer is written on the margin of the letter: 'The Duc de Friuli will have 12,000 francs paid to the Chief Almoner, from the receipts of the theatres.'

strove especially to prove that the marriage meant peace. 'This peace!' exclaimed Regnault in his speech in the Senate, 'what a guarantee has Europe acquired for its solidity and duration! France, transported with joy and love, has received in her bosom *an august messenger of peace*, the revered pledge of an eternal alliance! The world sees in it the harbinger of universal repose!' The president of the Senate was not less lyrical in his confident predictions: 'What interest has this glorious marriage not thrown upon our labours! Long years of sweetness and repose recalled to our recollections and responding to our hopes!' Foolish hopes, justly betrayed! the language of slaves flattering themselves to exert influence over a master whom they regret having created, but dare not contradict! In spite of all, these days of intoxication and illusion had not the settled content of lasting prosperity. They were nothing but the momentary excitement of a whole people. These noisy *fêtes*, these transports of joy, and the pomp that was more magnificent than any hitherto heard of, were only outward show, and a gross deception, concealing the pitfall into which France was ere long to fall. The truth regarding our situation was not to be found here; it lay in the events which were taking place on the confines of the Iberian peninsula, on the cliffs of Torres Vedras, appointed witnesses of the disasters of our army in Spain; and beneath that sombre northern sky where the premonitory symptoms of the great catastrophe of 1812 were already beginning to appear.

However imposing might be the spectacle of such splendour and prosperity, it was too artificial to prevent the reality betraying itself by some discordant note. The first dissonance occurred during the very marriage ceremony. The religious office had barely begun when Napoleon was seen to dart angry looks towards the half-empty benches where the twenty-seven cardinals at that time in Paris ought to have been sitting. Then, addressing the Archbishop of Malines, he said: 'Where are the cardinals? I do not see them.' When the prelate enumerated those who assisted at the ceremony and tried to excuse the absence of the rest

on account of their infirmities, he several times exclaimed, 'The fools!' with an accent of concentrated vengeance.[1] This scene rudely tore asunder the conventional veil which hid from view the real state of his relations with the Church. It might have been renewed in the case of each representative of the powers present at the marriage, could they have shown their true sentiments; for all figured there against their will: the Russian, because the alliance with him had been betrayed; the Prussian, because on this day he sustained a fresh defeat; even the Austrian, because, though hoping to derive advantages from the marriage, they were very problematical, and his court had by it received only an additional humiliation. If, instead of official demonstrations, the emotions of their hearts could have been seen, every countenance which beamed with a satisfaction that was only extorted by command, would have burst forth into distrust, rancour, hatred, and war.

The simple presence of these cardinals in Paris proved sufficiently into what a state of commotion the Church had been thrown by him whom a short while before she had styled, with so much complaisance, 'the restorer of her altars.' After his removal from Rome, Pope Pius VII. had been dragged from town to town as far as Grenoble, from whence he was taken back again to Savona, there finally to be kept prisoner. But the captivity of the pontiff had only been the prelude to Napoleon's measures for transforming the Church. Justly fearing the steps which the cardinals might take to supply what almost amounted to a vacancy of the Holy See, and determined to draw them on, either willingly or by force, in the new direction which he desired to impress upon the Catholic religion, he had the entire college of cardinals carried off from Rome and brought to Paris, with the sole exception of those who were excused on the score of their great age or their infirmities. It is easy, therefore, under these circumstances, to understand the degree of culpability those cardinals had incurred who had not seen proper to be present at the marriage ceremony. Brought to Paris by force, they would have been acting in strict

[1] De Pradt: *Les quatre Concordats.*

accordance with their rights and dignity had they not appeared at any official assembly, but they were far from having pushed audacity so far. Their crime consisted simply in refusing to associate themselves with an act which they considered as a misappreciation of the rights of their spiritual chief, sole judge in their opinion of the difficulties relating to the marriages of sovereigns. If meant as a protest, it was a very timid one, showing itself merely by silence and abstention. On the very morrow they went to the reception at the Tuileries, as if to redeem by prompt submission the hardihood of one moment. But revenge, as cruel as it was refined, awaited them there; for, after remaining in suspense for several hours, exposed to the derision of the courtiers, Napoleon had them driven from the palace as so many unfaithful servants. Not content, moreover, with insulting them in so severe and public a manner, he despoiled them of the purple, issued an order forbidding them henceforth to wear any insignia of the cardinalate, seized their personal effects, suppressed their salaries, left them no resources but a trifling income insufficient for their support, and ultimately banished them two by two to different towns in the provinces.[1]

These proceedings 'of the new Charlemagne' towards the Cardinals give a just idea of the authority which he meant to exercise henceforward over the Catholic Church. He acted towards her like a creator, and intended to be obeyed without a murmur. He kept a very exact account of the prostrate condition in which he had found her at the period of his coronation, and of the power which he had restored to her. The Church had then lauded him as her saviour, and the title was not an exaggeration. But, in recalling the benefits he had bestowed, his memory failed to remind him of the services he had himself received, and of the share which the Church had had in his elevation. He also forgot the power of resistance and strength of propagandism which he had restored to religious ideas. In the revolution produced at Rome by the Schönbrunn decree, and in all the acts which had led to it, he had

[1] Memoirs of Cardinal Consalvi.

encountered so much gentleness, resignation, and weakness both in the sovereign pontiff and the princes of the Church, as to persuade him that nothing, either in those enervated characters or those aged institutions, retained any strength capable of resisting his will. He intended, consequently, to act with regard to Rome as he had acted towards other states equally superannuated, and which he had completely transformed the better to assimilate and subdue them; he meant, in short, to act like a reorganiser who finishes and perfects some wonderful instrument of government.

Nor was it the Cardinals only whom he wished to have in Paris; the Pope himself should be brought thither in his turn, and partly by flattery, partly through fear, he would there inevitably succumb to his ascendency. Pius VII. would soon understand that it would be better to share the government of the world with the Emperor, to accept a magnificent establishment at St. Denis or Rheims, and to restore peace to the Church by accepting the rule of so formidable a power, than to persevere in sullen and fruitless opposition. While awaiting this expected submission, Napoleon, according to his usual method, was anxious to accumulate in a short space so many transformations and incontrovertible facts as should render all retreat impossible. Astounded at the facility with which he had been able to overthrow the pontifical government, at the little noise which its downfall had made in the world, at the profound indifference with which its protests had been received, and the incredible docility with which an organisation formerly so powerful had allowed itself to be treated, he had compelled all the essential instruments of the old Catholic centralisation, such as the generals of orders, the members of the tribunal of the penitentiary, and other officials, to follow the college of Cardinals to Paris. He notified at the same time to the powers who had representatives at Rome to the Holy See, that ecclesiastical affairs would henceforth be transacted at Paris, and that their residence should consequently be fixed there; an invitation which no Catholic power was then in a position to decline.

The archives of the Vatican, despatched in convoys of a hundred carriages starting every eight days, were also transferred to Paris, to be there deposited by Daunou in the Hôtel Soubise, and Napoleon even pushed his precautions so far as to have the tiara likewise brought thither, with a duplicate of the Fisherman's ring, and all the other insignia and ornaments of the pontifical power.

Thus, in some sort, would he henceforth find the officials and the working stock of the Catholic Church under his hand. In Napoleon's eyes that was everything. Had he ever taken moral forces into account? Could the soul offer him greater resistance than the body? He might readily believe not, in view of the facility with which he had brought about all these changes. The acts of violence of which he had been guilty had not roused one cry of revolt, not even a complaint. The excommunication, stifled as soon as produced, seemed to have been the last effort of pontifical energy. The cardinals appeared at all his receptions, they frequented the salons of Paris, and for the most part drew with resignation the salary of thirty thousand francs which consoled them for their servitude. As to those who had dared to absent themselves from the marriage ceremony, they were dispersed, dumb, terrified at their own audacity. The clergy of France, too submissive to venture on any direct protest, had attempted a hidden opposition under pretext of organising missions; but the missions had been immediately prohibited and all had fallen back into habitual silence. Nay, more: Napoleon flattered himself that he would induce this clergy, under the guise of Gallicanism, to co-operate with him in an enterprise, the only aim of which was to unite both the spiritual and temporal power in his own person.

In the month of November 1809 he assembled a committee of well-disposed bishops, chosen by himself, whose duty would consist in pointing out to him a method of warding off difficulties and breaking down obstacles without overstepping the bounds of Catholic doctrine, and who should thus cover his acts against the court of Rome with a kind of sacred authority. On the 11th of January 1810,

among other questions, he submitted the following to the committee. He wished to know,—if, in view of the obstinacy of the Pope, it was not desirable to call a council; if it would not be advisable to provide Pius VII. with a sort of family council composed of prelates from every nation; if no measures could be taken to prevent excommunications; if the Pope could from temporal motives refuse his intervention in spiritual affairs.[1] The answers of the committee were vague and embarrassed, except in what regarded the excommunication, which was distinctly styled an 'abuse of power;' but this embarrassment in itself proved that these same bishops were capable of being converted at an opportune moment.

The natural complement of all these measures was the famous Senatus-consultum of February 17, 1810, which united the Roman States to the Empire. The Pope was to enjoy a revenue of two million francs, and to have palaces 'in such different parts of the Empire *as he might wish to reside in*' (Art. 15)—a piece of irony most unseemly in regard to a prisoner kept under constant watch. The Popes should, on their elevation, take an oath never to do anything against the wishes of the Gallican Church. The Empire would undertake the expenses of the Sacred College of the Propaganda. The Papal States formed two departments, those of Rome and of Trasimenus. The city of Rome became the *second city of the Empire*, and the residence of a prince of the blood or of a grand dignitary, while the heir—whose birth and sex were both announced even before the marriage had taken place—was to bear the title of King of Rome.

In support of this measure, and as a statement of the motives which had suggested it, Regnault read to the Senate a most violent diatribe against the administration of Pius VII. Had the pontiff wished, he could have answered Napoleon's grievances by recriminations far better founded; but in approving, nay, in sanctioning by a solemn act, the proceedings, which, when applied to other sovereigns, were

[1] *Correspondance de Napoléon: questions au comité des évêques*, January 11, 1810.

odious, and of which he was now a victim, he had lost all authority for reproving them. On the day when he had crowned as Emperor the murderer of the Duc d'Enghien, on the day when he had exposed himself to be called 'an inconsistent puppet' by so fervent a Catholic as De Maistre, Pius VII. had lost all serious influence on European opinion, and even on the opinion of true believers. He had no other *prestige* than that of his misfortunes, his private virtues, and his weakness.

Regnault's statement touched but incidentally on the real true grievances which, in the name of history, might have been advanced against the very existence of the temporal power. He might have shown the Popes incessantly delivering Italy up to conquest, to foreign invasion, to civil discords, with the view of hindering the establishment of any durable nationality in the country,—even the spiritual interests of the Church herself perpetually sacrificed to the political interests of the Holy See. But such an accusation would have been the most irrefutable criticism on the man who had restored this same temporal power, for the sole purpose of making it subserve his ambitious projects. The more these grievances were just and well founded, the more inexcusable was Napoleon's neglect to notice them. Besides, the Emperor, better than any one, felt that therein lay the only possible justification for the overthrow of the political sovereignty of the Popes. No one attains the power of moving the world and governing great nations without possessing a keen sense of history, and Napoleon had long since understood and condemned the *rôle* of the papacy in Italy with its lamentable influence on the destinies of that country. The justification which he did not deem it wise to put forward in Regnault's statement, he intended to get developed in doctrinal and historical works, so as to make them reach all enlightened minds. The aim of these works, according to him, ought to be: (1) that the court of Rome had always used its spiritual weapons to maintain and increase its temporal authority; (2) that it had always been the enemy of every preponderating power in Italy . . . and had employed its power to

destroy every other.[1] This historical thesis, strictly true, was the precise plan of the solid and learned book which Daunon wrote upon the subject;[2] a book the only fault of which was its being published to order, for the advantage of a Cæsarism that was not less dangerous than a theocracy.

The judgment which Napoleon here expressed on the subject of the historical *rôle* of the papacy had already been expressed by Machiavelli in the sixteenth century. No sentence had ever been more just, no condemnation better deserved. But the question was more complex than Napoleon and his apologists pretended to think. In politics one must never lose sight of the consequences of a measure; and the point was to know, not whether the destruction of the temporal power was legitimate, but who was to be the gainer by it. Now its destruction could not, in view of the conditions under which it was to be made, benefit either general civilisation or liberty of conscience. All Napoleon's acts at this period—independently of his St. Helena confidences, which though often deceptive are on this point in accordance with the facts—tell us plainly enough the kind of *régime* he proposed to substitute for the system he had just destroyed. It was to be a sort of oriental patriarchate, in which the Pope, swearing allegiance to him, paid and inspired by him, would be nothing but a grand functionary of the Empire, a colleague of Cambacérès, a species of ecclesiastical arch-chancellor. 'What a lever! what a medium of influence over the rest of the world!' he afterwards enthusiastically exclaimed, when reviewing his favourite ideas of that period on the subject of the Church. 'I should have made an idol of the Pope, he should have remained near me. Paris would have become the capital of the Christian world, and I should have governed the religious as well as the political world . . . I should have had my religious sessions as well as my legislative sessions. *My councils* would have been the representation of Christianity, of which the Popes would have been only the presi-

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, December 15, 1810.

[2] *Essai sur le pouvoir temporel des Papes*, by Daunon.

dents.'[1] All the notes, letters and acts of Napoleon at this period prove that this was, in fact, the ultimate aim of his projects in the matter of religious organisation. The Church once the slave of his will, disciplined like a regiment, and the two powers merged in the person of the Emperor,—there is no doubt, considering the infinite perfection to which he had already brought his despotism, that this system would have produced the most absolute tyranny the world has ever seen; a scourge compared to which the abuses of the temporal sovereignty were as nothing.

However grandiose this conception might be, it was stained with the vice which invalidated all Napoleon's political plans, and sooner or later was sure to bring his rule to immense discomfiture; it was out of true proportion to his powers, contrary to the spirit of the age, and incompatible with the progress of civilisation. The three centuries of free discussion that had elapsed since the middle ages had disseminated too much enlightenment and independence of mind throughout the world to permit absolutism of so monstrous a nature to become a reality. All Napoleon's manifestoes were full of invectives and declamations against the folly of Gregory VII. and Boniface VIII., yet his dream was nothing but this system turned to the profit of an empire far more chimerical than their theocracy had been. Moreover, this Utopia of a despot had not the excuse of being conceived in an age of barbarism or darkness. A keen observer might have recognised the emptiness of the dream by one fact which is the touchstone of false ideas. The sign by which it is easy to know false systems is simply that when men even are disposed to submit to them the nature of things resists them, and one trifling obstacle is sufficient to hold them in check. Napoleon had reached that point when he might believe the greatest difficulties had been surmounted. He had under his hand at Paris all the machinery, all the instruments of the old pontifical government; he detained all its chiefs, for the most part his voluntary prisoners, submissive to his caprices, and wearing their gilded chains

[1] *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, by Las Cases.

with perfect resignation; he had on his side public opinion, because deceived, and philosophy, indifferent to the misfortunes of those who so long had persecuted it. The Pope himself seemed to have resigned himself to the loss of his states, and, not daring either to protest or to complain, only spoke with friendliness of his old ally.[1] Pius VII.—so often reproached with imitating Gregory VII.—might have tried to use the same spiritual arms which that pontiff had employed; he might have launched an interdict on France, declaring it in schism, suspending in every part of its territory the exercise of public worship, he might have renewed with increased force the anathemas which Napoleon dreaded, though he pretended to laugh at them. But he shrank from employing such energetic measures, and limited his defence to systematically enveloping himself in silence and abstention. And yet by this imperceptible obstacle the religious Cæsarism was wrecked, and the Pope's passive resistance was in itself sufficient to paralyse all Napoleon's plans.

In resuscitating the old imperial and pontifical theory, Napoleon had in part revived the disputes of the Carlovingian period between the Pope and the Emperor. On the occasion of the first misunderstandings, the quarrel on investitures had reappeared in the question of the institution of bishops. The Pope refused, under various pretexts, to fill up the vacant sees; an act which threw trouble and disorder into the heart of the nation. True, on the representations of his counsellors, he afterwards consented to institute bishops appointed by the Emperor, but on condition of no mention being made of the latter in the bulls of institution, thus in some sort denying to him as a right the prerogative which he was willing to grant him in fact. After he was carried into captivity, the Pope refused to institute any more bishops, alleging, not without reason, that he was no longer free, and could not fulfil the offices of the pontificate. The number of vacant sees rapidly increased, soon amounting to twenty-seven. The Emperor then, by the advice of

[1] Despatch of M. Lebzeltern to M. de Metternich, May 10, 1810, dated from Savona.

men eminent in canon-law, sought for some method of overcoming the difficulty, and fancied he had found it by bestowing on the bishops, who were appointed but not instituted, the title of vicars-capitular.

Such vicars are, as is well known, provisional administrators, elected by the chapters to govern a diocese until the vacancy is filled up by the Holy See. By making the chapters elect the bishops named by him, Napoleon flattered himself that he was creating a kind of provisional episcopate which would govern the dioceses peacefully, until such time as his reconciliation with the Pope should regulate the position of the prelates. But, on the one hand, the office of vicar-capitular was not sought after by the titulars of the dioceses, because the authority which it conferred was precarious, disputed, and injurious to their future dignity;[1] on the other, the majority of the bishops had been already chosen, before the Emperor thought of this expedient, and those appointed by him could not take possession of their sees without placing themselves in opposition both to the Pope and their own chapters. The obstacle therefore was in no wise removed, and the Pope's refusal paralysed everything. Thus at the very time when he had got hold of the wonderful catholic mechanism, perfected during the course of centuries, and was flattering himself that he could make it work to his advantage, Napoleon perceived that, in spite of all his precautions, the motive power necessary to set it going altogether failed him. An almost invisible continuity existed between the two powers which sufficed to annul his influence. To keep the Pope enchained and powerless availed him nothing, if he could not succeed in making him, either of his own free will or by force, give that primary impetus to the Church without which it would fall into a state of inaction, or in other words give it that first *filip* with which, says Pascal, Descartes could not dispense when he wished to set his *vortices* in motion.

It was a question therefore of subduing at any cost the passive resistance of Pius VII.,—a difficult enterprise, for

[1] Letter of the Minister of Public Worship, Bigot de Préameneu, to Napoleon, Dec. 7, 1810.

the weakest natures are capable of perseverance and courage when they can be exercised in the form of inaction. The Pope, although treated at Savona with all the respect compatible with his captivity, had been completely separated from his former counsellors, and had no one about him but a few servants. Napoleon, who had long been acquainted with his truly touching qualities, his gentleness, goodness, and resignation, and who said he had 'the temper of a lamb,' had calculated that such isolation, sorrow, and discouragement, would insure him an easy victory over the Pontiff's obstinacy; the result, however, did not respond to his anticipations. Pius VII. had seemed more consoled than distressed now that he no longer had to bear the responsibility and the cares of the pontifical government. His tastes, always simple to monastic plainness, were well suited to his new life. He had even rejected the extra luxury and state which Count Salmatoris offered him in the name of the Emperor, being satisfied with the simplest necessaries for himself and his attendants. He felt no regret whatever for his past opulence, and Napoleon committed a gross mistake in fancying that he could influence a mind like his by the prospect of a large income or imperial magnificence. Nothing could be hoped for from that kind of temptation, and other influences were consequently brought to bear upon him.

Cardinals and bishops, Fesch, Caprara, and Maury, were made to address the Pope supplicating him to restore peace to the Church by instituting the bishops appointed by the Emperor; he firmly refused, however, to yield to their requests. Somewhat later an Austrian diplomatist, M. de Lebzeltern, came to Savona under pretext of settling affairs of his own there, but in reality with the view of sounding the dispositions of Pius VII. towards Napoleon. He then ascertained that while preserving a kind of affection for his terrible adversary, the Pope was more than ever determined to persist in his system of abstention, exclaiming, when allusion was made to his personal position, 'We ask for nothing, we have nothing more to lose. We have sacrificed everything to our duty; we are old, and have no

wants. We wish neither for pensions nor honours. The alms of the faithful are sufficient for us. What personal consideration then can turn us away from the line our conscience bids us follow?'[1]

Standing upon this ground Pius VII. was invincible, for no constraint could reach him there. Cardinals Spina and Caselli, who visited him a little later, in order to make fresh efforts in the same direction, found him immovable. But this was too great a trial for Napoleon's impatience and irritability, and he replied to the Pontiff's inflexibility by issuing an order to the appointed bishops desiring them to repair instantly to their respective sees, to administer them in virtue of their episcopal titles, and to take no notice of any resistance on the part of their chapters.[2] Then, in order to give more effect to the war which he declared—no longer against a Pope-King, but against the spiritual Head of the Church—he appointed Cardinal Maury, the eloquent defender of the clergy of France during the Revolution, to the bishopric of Paris, after having deposed Cardinal Fesch, his own relative, from that see, of which he was the temporary titular, and in which he often showed an independence that did him honour with regard to the Emperor. Maury had passed fifteen years of exile in Rome, where he had lost many of his illusions and much of his old asperity, and where his good sense had been strengthened by observation of the great events of history; but this was not a good qualification for serving the Catholic cause well, at a time when all compromise seemed impossible, and passion alone was listened to. The Bishop of Nancy, M. de Osmond, was appointed to the archbishopric of Florence.

At the same time, with a view to prompt execution, which should make his orders irrevocable as the decrees of fate, Napoleon worked with incredible ardour at effacing every vestige of pontifical government from the Roman States. Not content with having transformed them into two French departments, and entirely renewed their civil

[1] Despatch of Lebzeltern to Metternich, May 16, 1810.
[2] Napoleon to Bigot de Préameneu, November 16, 1810.

and military organisation, he determined to uproot the clericalism which had become ingrained into the habits, the institutions, and even the family life of Italy. All the higher tribunals of the Church, the heads of orders, the college of Cardinals, and the archives, had been transferred to Paris, but the minor officials had all been left in Rome, and they formed an innumerable legion, recruited throughout the entire world. He first attacked the bishoprics. There were thirty bishops in the Roman States, or about one bishop for every 25,000 souls. In the remainder of the Empire the proportion averaged one bishop for from 600,000 to 800,000 souls, and often for 1,000,000. This number he reduced to four for the two departments of Rome and the Trasimène. The number of parishes, chapters, convents, and foreign beneficed clergy was no less exorbitant—in fact the unfortunate country was eaten up by them. The foreign priests were the first to receive an order to return to their native lands.[1] All the convents were then suppressed, their property given to the crown, and their inmates sent with small pensions back to their homes. The total value of the mortmain property in the Roman States amounted to 250,000,000 francs. Napoleon seized it, and immediately had it sold for 150,000,000.[2] The number of parishes in Rome was to be reduced to twenty. In order the more easily to get rid of the parish priests and the bishops, the obligation was imposed upon them, and upon all monks and ecclesiastics, of swearing allegiance to the Emperor, and making a declaration in favour of the Gallican liberties. Refusal was equivalent to dismissal, followed at once by exile and confiscation: 'Give an order to the consultus,' wrote Napoleon, 'to make all the bishops take the oath, to send those who refuse to France, and to sequester their property.'[3] And two days later he added, 'I suppose that all the bishops, parish priests, vicars and canons have, at this present moment, taken the oath, or are on the road to France, and

[1] Napoleon to Bigot de Préameneu, April 15, 1810.
[2] Napoleon to Gaudin, duke of Gaëta, May 17, 1810.
[3] *Ibid.*, May 7, 1810.

their goods seized by the registrars. As to the bishops, not only their ecclesiastical but also their patrimonial property must be seized.'[1] These measures, for which Napoleon acquired a taste on account of the immense property that fell into his hands by such confiscations, extended to Piedmont, Liguria, Tuscany, and the states of Parma and Plasencia, and were everywhere supported by a strong military occupation and numerous detachments of troops. At the end of a few months, the unfortunate Italian priests who were banished to the island of Corsica, or were relegated to some corner of France, might be counted by hundreds.[2] Rome, deprived of its Pope, despoiled of its pontifical pomp, of its legions of priests, monks, and cardinals, and with a general at the head of affairs, soon assumed the uniform and colourless aspect of a French *préfecture*. For the priestly government a military one was substituted—a doubtful improvement; while in exchange for what it had lost, Rome only received the empty title of the *second city of the Empire*, and the very ashes of that ancient home of Catholicism were as though dispersed and cast to the winds.

[1] Napoleon to Gaudin, duke of Gaëta, May 9, 1810.

[2] See the inedited documents quoted by M. de Haussonville: *L'Église romaine et le Premier Empire*.

CHAPTER VII

DISTRIBUTION OF THE CONQUERED TERRITORIES—THE CONTINENTAL BLOCKADE—NAPOLEON AND KING LOUIS —HOLLAND JOINED TO THE EMPIRE

(*November* 1809–*July* 1810)

THE peace of Vienna was thus barely signed when, in spite of the happy and reassuring prospect which his marriage with Marie-Louise seemed to promise, Napoleon was in open war with the Church and suppressed hostility towards Russia. Nor were his relations with other continental powers much more satisfactory. That Turkey, betrayed and abandoned by him, or Prussia, which he had dismembered as well as crushed by war contributions, and at this very time was treating like a merciless creditor, should have been deeply discontented, can be no matter for surprise. But his exactions and restlessness exasperated even our natural allies, nay, even those kings who had been created by him, and could not exist without him. His relations with Murat, Joseph, Louis, and Jerome, despite the family ties that united them, often more nearly resembled enmity than good understanding, and, notwithstanding the submission to which their dependence forced them, their true sentiments frequently betrayed themselves in moments of impatience and irritation.

The very sovereigns whom he enriched by the spoliation of Austria, although outwardly expressing satisfaction, were at heart ill disposed against him on account of the burdens of every description by which he made them repay his benefits, of the humiliating subjection which he imposed

upon them, and, above all, the little security offered by a system that was nothing but a constant remodelling of their states. Napoleon considered it still necessary to maintain, at least in appearance, the engagement he had entered into not to extend the limits of the Empire beyond the Rhine; consequently he distributed the conquered territory amongst his vassals of the Confederation of the Rhine. But while giving with one hand, he claimed the right of taking back with the other, without the least regard to the decorum habitual in a donor; and when increasing a dominion he acted like one who had the right to dispose of it. To Bavaria he gave Salzburg, Ratisbon, the Innviertel and Baireuth; but he deprived her of the Italian Tyrol which, like the German Tyrol, she held by virtue of the treaty of Presburg, because he wished to annex it to Italy; of Ulm, which he desired to hand over to Wurtemberg; and lastly, of certain portions of the Palatinate which he reserved for Baden. Moreover, for these benefits she had to pay the sum of thirty million francs, as well as a large amount in gifts to French generals. The principality of Ratisbon, thus handed to Bavaria, was abruptly withdrawn from another of Napoleon's allies, the Prince-primate, President of the Confederation of the Rhine, who in compensation received the principality of Frankfort, formed by the territories of Fulda and Hanau.

The Prince-primate, Duke of Dalberg, had previously been elector and archbishop of Mayence; this was therefore his third change of sovereignty, and with it his heir presumptive was also changed. The Emperor had at first named Cardinal Fesch, his own uncle, as successor to the Primate's title and sovereignty; now, however, Fesch was in disgrace for having defended the interests of the Church; some compensation, moreover, was needed to console Prince Eugène for his downfall from the position of an adopted son and the probable loss of his title of Viceroy; consequently, Prince Eugène was declared to be next in succession to the principality of Frankfort.

Jerome was not forgotten in the distribution, despite the many subjects of complaint which Napoleon had against

him. He received Hanover and the fortress of Magdeburg, on condition that he should maintain and pay a corps of occupation composed of eighteen thousand French troops, and should furnish subsidies to the annual amount of from eleven to twelve million francs. Jerome, accustomed like his brothers Joseph and Louis to receive far more abuse than praise from Napoleon, possessed the great advantage over them that he never regarded his sovereignty from a serious point of view. Solely occupied with pleasure, and regarding his throne only as a means for indulging his vices, he cared neither to win the affection of his people nor to lighten the burdens that weighed upon them. Besides, he never had to sustain a war such as was then ravaging Spain, nor to surmount difficulties like those which Louis encountered in Holland. Hence the favour with which Napoleon treated him, compared with the harshness he showed towards his other brothers.

This settlement of German affairs had been accompanied by the evacuation of the Austrian provinces. Napoleon thus recovered the free disposal of his troops. Every one supposed they could guess the use he intended to make of them, for, if he so wished, he could now turn the entire mass against Spain, the only spot on the Continent where any one still dared to resist him. The hard blow which he had just struck at Austria, and the alliance he had contracted with her, which, though far from firm, was effective for the moment, guaranteed to him, at least for a while, the neutrality of those powers who were at heart most hostile to him. This unhoped-for respite could not be turned to greater profit than by hastening to finish a war beset with such difficulties and dangers. If Wellington, after his brilliant campaign at Talavera, had been forced to retire upon Portugal in presence of an energetic concentration of the Emperor's troops in Spain, how could it be supposed that he would be able to resist them, when reinforced by that army which had just been victorious at Wagram, especially if commanded by its own incomparable general? It must be admitted that, in spite of the formidable defences which Wellington was accumulating round Lisbon in an-

ticipation of such an event, the issue of a new campaign, undertaken in Spain by Napoleon at the head of his victorious army, had many chances of being decisively favourable. Such a campaign was due to those unfortunate soldiers of his in Spain, who were worn out by a war *de grands chemins*, and he undoubtedly felt the obligation that lay upon him. He had entered into a solemn engagement to that effect on the 3d of December 1809, when, on opening the Session of the Legislative Body, he had said: 'When I show myself beyond the Pyrenees, the *leopard*, *terrified*, *will seek the ocean*, to escape from shame, defeat, and death.' His enemies believed he had adopted this resolution, because it was more to his interest than any other, and was the one thing they most dreaded on his part: his admirers believed it, because it was more than any other in character with his genius, which habitually neglected all accessories in order to attack the vital point of each difficulty at once and directly, to bring everything to bear upon, and to sacrifice everything to, the one main object he might have in view.

But it was impossible any longer to disguise the fact that if he wished to attain this end he must devote all the means at his disposal to compass it. Proof of this had been given. Since the struggle commenced in Spain, Napoleon had almost constantly maintained an army there, amounting to nearly 400,000 men, composed of his choicest troops. He had also sent his bravest and most experienced generals thither:—Soult, Jourdan, Ney, Lannes, Victor, Suchet, Junot, Mortier, and Saint-Cyr; yet, despite all their efforts, despite so much blood shed and so many battles gained, Joseph's throne was less stable than ever. However much he might pretend to despise the insurgents, they only required the aid of 25,000 English under Wellington to render all our conquests again doubtful. With such experience, it was not allowable to believe in the success of half measures. To conquer Spain she must be crushed; and to overcome such obstinate resistance was a task great enough for all our united forces. Nay, more; it was a task not unworthy of the genius of the Emperor in

person—above all, not unworthy of his authority, for his presence alone could put a stop to the rivalries between the marshals, and imprint on their operations the harmony and unity necessary to surmount every obstacle.

Great then was the astonishment of Europe, and equally great the joy of our enemies, when, after the evacuation of the Austrian territory, instead of taking the road to the Pyrenees and Spain as had been expected, our troops were seen to march towards the shores of the Northern Sea and the Baltic, alternately to occupy the coasts of Holland and of Hanover, the mouths of the Weser and of the Elbe, the Hanseatic towns, the fortresses of Stettin, Cüstrin, and Glogau, on the Oder, which we held as pledges for the Prussian debt, and even to push their advance-guard as far as Dantzic on the Vistula. The severe and inexorable Davout had supreme command of all these forces, and was to fix his residence at Hamburg. Rapp was left at Dantzic. The continental blockade was the pretext alleged for this immense line of occupation, which embraced almost the entire seaboard of the Continent from the mouths of the Vistula to Dalmatia. In consequence of the extension of this line, the successive reinforcements sent to the Pyrenees could not exceed 100,000 men. The exaggerated development imparted to this fatal system, and the complications it gave rise to, soon afforded Napoleon plausible motives for not quitting Paris, and for thus evading the engagement he had undertaken to repair in person to a country the fanaticism of which he undoubtedly dreaded. The war in Spain continued to fasten itself on the side of the Empire, like one of those maladies which are often treated with palliatives when requiring violent remedies, and the examination of which is postponed because no one likes to admit their gravity.

When the Emperor published the decrees of Berlin and of Milan, they were regarded more as a bravado and an attempt at intimidation on his part than as a fixed and well-considered system. By the first he had declared England in a state of blockade, at a time when he found it impossible to keep the smallest boat on the sea; by the

second he proclaimed all neutral vessels denationalised and lawful prizes which submitted to the British Board of Admiralty by accepting its permit of navigation. It was doubtless difficult to imagine that a man of such keen intellect, after having, moreover, admitted the impossibility of conquering England at sea, should have conceived the mad idea of forcing her to capitulate by closing to her commerce all the markets of the Continent. The primary condition essential to the realisation of such a dream was that Napoleon should be absolute master of the Continent; and even taking this for granted, his plan would have been most difficult to execute. But the Emperor was far from having reached that point in 1807 and 1808. The continental blockade, therefore, at the period of its first notification, had seemed a mere defiant measure, an attempt at reprisal on paper, a last echo of the wretched style of declamation habitual to the Committee of Public Safety; and this conviction deepened in the public mind from the fact of the blockade being at first but feebly and languidly observed, especially during the period of the war with Austria.

But such illusion was not to last long. No sooner was the peace signed than Napoleon returned with greater zest than ever to his favourite idea, loudly proclaiming his firm intention of enforcing the blockade with the utmost rigour. In order to understand how preposterous was this system, it is essential to understand all its practical consequences. In reality it was not the suspension of English commerce which it alone involved, as seemed to be stated, but that of all maritime trade. The first effect produced by the measures published by Napoleon was to annihilate or render inactive the marine of all the old neutral powers. No trade was any longer carried on except through the medium of England. The blockade, consequently, meant not only the loss of all the manufactured produce of English industry, but also absolute prohibition of that colonial produce which, in the north especially, had become of primary necessity, such as sugar, cotton, coffee, tobacco, tea, spices, the woods used in dyeing—an indispensable article of trade—besides

medical productions like quinine; and lastly, even salt, which some countries, such as Sweden, could only obtain by sea. But these privations, though trying, were not all. At the same time that these northern countries, so ill treated already, had to submit to the loss of such highly prized importations from regions more favoured than our own, they had also to give up their export trade, for their natural products, iron, timber for building, pitch and tar, could not be transported by water, and the land carriage being treble the cost price, it amounted to positive prohibition.

Thus, for the majority of the European states, the continental blockade was, in other words, the destruction of all commerce and wholesale trade, besides the privation of the most necessary commodities of life, while it had cost them their navy and their colonies, and caused them misery and ruin. Moreover, it imposed upon them a series of insufferable annoyances; for the prohibited merchandise was not only watched on the frontiers, but searched for and seized in private dwellings; hence it has been rightly affirmed in regard to Germany, that the continental system contributed more than the conquest itself to rouse the population against us.[1]

In France and in the southern regions of Europe, where the natural productions were able, up to a certain point, to supply the absence of the colonial—where, for instance, sugar was replaced by grape-syrup, and afterwards by beet-root sugar, American cotton by Neapolitan, or by linen, indigo by woad, and coffee by chicory—the evil was less keenly felt. France, moreover, possessed all the compensations inherent to victory, besides the resources of the national character, marvellously skilful in turning everything to account; but to the northern countries, the populations of which were accustomed to demand from commerce the products and commodities which their own soil refused to them, submission was nothing less than suicide. And they were to impose all these intolerable evils upon themselves in order to consolidate the power of their oppressor! They were

[1] *Mémoires* of Comte de Senfft, former Minister of the king of Saxony.

asked to endure them voluntarily in order to support the man who had conquered and humbled them, and still held them down beneath a rod of iron; with the view, moreover, of destroying the only nation which had resisted him successfully, and which still fought for popular freedom. Nay, more; he flattered himself that they would show zeal in carrying out measures of which they were the first victims, for the slightest remissness in the surveillance would perturb the whole system. It was supposed that they would attribute all their sufferings, not to that man who was their author, nor to his hated agents, but to the nation which was fighting against his tyranny. The more their exasperation would increase, it was apparently thought, the more would England become isolated and exposed to danger.

To this supposition, which was purely Utopian, Napoleon added another illusion no less dangerous. It consisted in believing that the continental blockade had struck a serious blow at the prosperity of England, and that its continuance would soon make her perish from inanition. Facts gave him, on this question, the most positive contradiction. The industrial and commercial activity of England had never been greater, notwithstanding the debt of nearly eighty millions sterling with which she annually burdened herself.[1] The depreciation of her paper currency, which had fallen twenty per cent, was only caused by too large an issue, and in no wise by uneasiness as to the state of public affairs. It was soon remedied by the abrogation of the law which authorised the bank to suspend payments in specie.[2] If the blockade had closed many continental markets to England, the contrabandists, encouraged underhand by those who were ostensibly obliged to prosecute them, still kept a large number open to her, and her exports in Europe alone amounted to six hundred million francs; they had increased

[1] These encumbrances amounted in the year 1809 to 1,940,000,000 francs, or about £79,998,000, of which nearly one and a half milliard francs was levied by taxes.

[2] Annual Register: Report of the Bullion Committee, August 1810. The Bank took advantage of the delay allowed her to adjourn the measure.

in a constant progression since 1805.[1] Moreover, she found great compensation in the suppression of all competition, naturally resulting from the forced inactivity of the neutral merchantmen. Thus, while it had been intended to strike her, the monopoly of commerce had been created in her favour. Lastly, she had also found immense compensation in the seizure of the greater number of the European colonies, and in the exclusive traffic of the markets of Spanish America.

But the continental system was so impracticable, that even in France, where its inconvenience was more easily borne than elsewhere on account of the richness of the soil and the advantages arising from conquest, its application was evaded, not only by means of contraband trade, but also by a fraud authorised by the government. This fraud, to some extent sanctioned, was carried on by means of licences, a species of permission to move about, for which a high price was paid. Owing to these licences, privileged privateers could carry to England our corn and wines, which she consented to receive because she wanted them, and our silks, which however had to be thrown into the sea, because she would not take them. They brought back with them certain products essential to our manufactures, such as dye woods and fish-oil. The great organiser of this fraud was Napoleon himself, who discovered an immense source of revenue in this unjust traffic, and who never felt the slightest scruple in ruining honest trade for the advantage of the most unworthy monopolists. Moreover, it is clear from his correspondence that his police agents did not fail to imitate him in this particular by deceiving even himself.[2] But while thus violating his own laws, he took care to reserve the benefit of such transgression to himself exclusively, and none the less persisted in imposing them, in all their rigour, upon his allies. It is easy, in view of such facts, to form some idea of the com-

[1] Annual Register for 1809. Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, April 18, 1810, State Papers.

[2] See in particular a letter of Napoleon to Fouché, dated Nov. 29, 1809.

plaints, the subterfuges, the recriminations, reciprocal grievances, and difficulties of every description to which a system thus applied could not fail to give rise. In presence of the dangers, abuses, and crying vices of this blockade, which one of his ministers[1] called 'the most disastrous and most false of fiscal inventions,' one asks oneself if Napoleon, in pushing it to such an extreme, really saw in it, as has always been asserted, a means of forcing England to surrender at discretion, or whether he did not rather seek in it a pretext for meddling in the administration of allied states, and of completing the conquest of Europe, which in fact was the underlying, but logical and necessary, preliminary of the continental system.

Certain it is that difficulties arose from the first moment the blockade was enforced. They were of such a nature that it absolutely depended on Napoleon to make them eventuate in peace or war, as he might choose. This kind of ambiguous position eminently suited his policy, ever on the watch for opportunities, and careful to maintain his hold over others, without permitting any over himself. What, from this point of view, could be more advantageous than an engagement of which the exact performance was impossible? With his continental system in force, Napoleon found himself, in regard to other European powers, standing in the position of a creditor towards an insolvent debtor, who can always be prosecuted and his goods seized. Amongst the sovereigns who had accepted so impracticable a compact, not one was free from fault; nor could this be surprising, when Napoleon himself was so far from observing the regulations. But he thus held a high hand over them, and kept them perpetually in dread of chastisement.

Armed with this harsh legislation, he could recriminate with advantage against doubtful or ill-disposed allies; and could even invoke it against his own relatives, whose good will was above suspicion, but who shrank from the impossibility of enforcing the blockade, or recoiled from the atrocities attending certain measures. From this point of view, his brothers Joseph, Jérome, and Louis, his brother-

[1] Mollien: *Mémoires d'un Minister du Trésor*, vol. iii.

in-law Murat, and even the docile Viceroy himself, were not less culpable than the kings of Prussia and Denmark. The incessant reproaches he addressed to them prove how difficult it must have been for other sovereigns to find favour in his eyes. If the blockade did not ruin England, it at the least afforded Napoleon a means of constraining, intimidating, and, if need be, of intervening with irresistible force,—a description of merit which in his opinion surpassed all others. Hence sprang his perseverance in imposing it upon every state under pretext of defending the cause of neutrals against England, and if it did not give him freedom at sea, it secured him every facility for completing the conquest of the Continent.

When Sweden, towards the end of 1809, signed with Russia the disastrous peace which cost her Finland, Napoleon held in his hands Stralsund and Pomerania. Instead of claiming a fragment of her territory from Sweden, he astonished the world by his moderation, contenting himself with only asking, as his share, her adhesion to the continental blockade. In return for this concession he consented to restore everything to the Regent whom the Swedes had chosen, after having driven away their king, Gustavus IV. A small concession truly! for Swedish independence was what the Regent had delivered up to him. But Sweden, happily for her, was situated somewhat out of his reach. A few months after her adhesion to the blockade, Napoleon reproached her with not enforcing the treaty, in a tone of menace, and in terms which monarchs only use towards their subjects. He imperiously demanded the expulsion of the English consuls, the seizure of the colonial merchandise, even on board Swedish vessels, the extradition of Fauche Borel and other French refugees, and the abolition of every decoration belonging to the France of former days. 'My intention,' he added, 'is to make war on Sweden rather than to endure being thus insulted by her.'[1] A hundred times better would it have been to give up a province than to have consented to such intermeddling! A month later his summonses were still more

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, May 16, 1810.

threatening, and the Swedish minister in Paris was informed that his passports would be delivered to him if the Regent did not enforce the system.[1]

The daily tone of our relations with the other European states, notably with Denmark and Prussia, was similar. The position of Prussia was aggravated by the fact that she still owed us eighty-six million francs of the war contributions. The very natural wishes which she had formed against us during the Austrian campaign were counted as so many acts of open hostility on her part. She implored delay for the discharge of her debt. King Frederic William wrote to Napoleon, describing the distress of his kingdom, reminding him that he had 'resisted solicitations from abroad, and stifled insurrectionary agitation,' that his fidelity in fulfilling his engagements had exhausted his people, and that quite recently he had been 'forced to sell his jewels and his gold and silver plate.'[2] But the Emperor refused to grant him the alleviations he requested, and answered his humiliating application by a positive refusal.[3] Soon after, the payments on which he had calculated not having been effected at the appointed time, he made Prussia the derisive offer of taking Silesia in lieu of the debt;[4] and somewhat later consented, at the request of the king, to countenance the opening of a loan to Prussia in Holland.

Towards Russia Napoleon could not venture to adopt the domineering tone which had succeeded so well with weaker states. In that country was a government which observed him closely, which thoroughly understood his stratagems, and which, though determined to continue to treat him with the utmost respect, dared to tell him the truth. Alexander had already most legitimate grievances against Napoleon, and although he did not think of urging them for the moment, he reserved them for future use like

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, June 16, 1810.

[2] Letter of the king of Prussia to Napoleon, dated October 18, 1809.

[3] Napoleon to King Frederic William III., November 6, 1809.

[4] To Champagny, February 12, 1810.

a prudent man. He had caught his ally in the very act of duplicity three times in the course of a few months: first, in the affair of the Galician cessions; a little later in that of the marriage, when Napoleon's confused denials of a double negotiation only served to throw greater light on his insincerity;[1] later again, in the projected treaty relative to Poland. The continental blockade could only afford fresh causes for recrimination. It was at the time when Napoleon was demanding the strict observance of the system with the greatest earnestness that Alexander became aware of the infractions he himself committed by means of the licences. It is easy to imagine the sentiments with which such deceit was viewed in a country where foreign produce was so urgently needed from the poverty of its own soil, and from which all exports had to be sent by sea. If the blockade imposed privations on us, to Russia it brought ruin, and yet it was we who had the pretension to impose it upon her, at a time too when we did not respect it ourselves! Alexander had no difficulty in unmasking the enormity of such base conduct. Napoleon answered his complaints, as usual, by denying the wrong he was reproached with. It was true, he said, that he had granted licences for the exportation of his wines and corn, but none for the importation of foreign commodities[2]—a statement that was absolutely false. Russia henceforward had the right to take every liberty with the blockade which she considered necessary for softening its rigour, and it soon became evident that conquest alone would force her to observe it in all its severity.

But of all European countries, that which suffered the most disastrous consequences from the enforcement of the blockade, without any doubt, was Holland. Dragged on against her will within the orbit of a military power whose burdens she shared without any equivalent advantages; deprived one by one of her rich colonies, of her flourishing navy, of her maritime trade which had been so brisk as to make her the negotiator of the whole world; left

[1] To Champagny, March 16, 1810.
[2] Napoleon to Champagny, February 18, 1810.

without any resource but the produce of an inadequate soil laboriously snatched from the sea; exhausted by having to maintain an army that was as incommensurate with her means as it was above her needs, and the principal duty of which consisted in holding down Holland herself under its yoke,—she had long since been living on a mere remnant of her ancient opulence. No trade remained to her but her banks—still the great Exchanges of Europe,—her cheeses and her salted provisions, although the latter were daily more and more injured by the hindrances arising from English surveillance on the importation of salt by sea. Under these circumstances, depriving her of her trade in colonial commodities, however much reduced these were by the naval war, was striking her a fatal blow, and it may be said, literally, that if other countries suffered from the blockade, Holland was dying from it.

Attached though he was to his brother, King Louis could not continue insensible to these evils. Not deficient in wisdom and cultivation, though ungifted with much largeness of mind, of a simple and honest disposition, hiding beneath a cold exterior much passionate feeling, sincerely philanthropic despite fits of ill-humour which were principally due to his bad health and conjugal misfortunes, King Louis considered that in accepting the Dutch crown he had also accepted duties towards his subjects. From the very morrow of his elevation to the throne he had constituted himself their official defender against Napoleon. Like his brother Joseph he soon discovered to his cost that the pretended kings created by Napoleon were, in his mind, only so many disguises of conquest and instruments of despotism. In the eyes of the Emperor their only object was the preservation under his hand of countries which he did not yet dare to unite openly to the Empire, out of consideration for the opinion of Europe. They were nothing but the primary form of future annexations.

Louis, therefore, had done his best to defend the lives and fortunes of his subjects against Napoleon. He had endeavoured to diminish the contingents they were called

upon to supply to our forces by land and sea, to reduce the number of vessels and gunboats they were obliged to maintain, to lighten the taxes; lastly and especially to grant some toleration and facilities to their commerce which had been so cruelly dealt with. These facts had become matter of unceasing reproach on the part of Napoleon; nay, sometimes of the harshest invective, and no act of Louis's administration any longer found favour in his sight. Louis's faults, which were of a most inoffensive character, such as are committed by a man who loves to play the sovereign—as for instance the restoration of ancient titles of nobility and the creation of marshals—were regarded by Napoleon as positive crimes, and he soon began to repent of ever having placed Louis on the throne of Holland. Even on the 27th of March 1808, when offering him the crown of Spain in preference to Joseph, he wrote: 'The climate of Holland does not suit you. Besides, she cannot rise from her ruins.' Again later, in August of the same year, he caused a proposal to be made to Louis to give him Brabant and Zealand in exchange for the Hanseatic towns; but Louis indignantly repelled this project for the dismemberment of the country which had confided to him her destinies.

It was thus against his own brother that Napoleon was induced to make use, for the first time, of the facility which this continental system afforded him for completing the subjugation of Europe. The cautious but persevering and unconquerable resistance which Louis opposed to an over-strict application of the blockade, at a time when Napoleon imperiously demanded its enforcement, changed Napoleon's vague desires into a fixed resolve. On his return to Paris from the Austrian campaign, Napoleon had already decided on dethroning his brother, but he wished to avoid as much as possible the odium of such an act, by casting, according to his custom, at least some apparent wrongs on the man whose downfall he contemplated: in short, by approaching it by such gradations as were necessary for the preparation of public opinion. The relations between the two brothers had, at that period, reached such a point of bitterness that

Louis every instant expected to see Holland invaded, and was calculating his means of defence beforehand. After the expedition to Walcheren, both Zealand and Brabant had been occupied by our troops under the pretext of a demonstration against the English, and King Louis had been invited to Paris, where his brother had just arrived. He was too clear-sighted not to understand the meaning of this manœuvre; and, notwithstanding the paucity of his resources, was inclined, for an instant, to decline the invitation, and to call his people to arms. His ministers however advised him to obey, and he left for France.

Louis had barely reached Paris when he learned the scope of his brother's intentions. To his intense surprise, and without having been told anything, he read the following declaration in the newspapers, extracted from the Emperor's speech at the opening of the Legislative Body: 'Holland, lying between England and France, is crushed equally by both; she is the outlet of the principal arteries of my empire. *Changes will become necessary.* The safety of my frontiers and the interest of the two countries imperatively require it.' The language of the Minister of the Interior was still more significant. 'Holland,' he said, '*is in reality only a portion of France.* That country may define itself by stating that it is the alluvium of the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt; in other words, one of the great arteries of the Empire. . . . Crushed between France and England, Holland is deprived both of the advantages enjoyed by those who oppose our general system, because she must refuse them, and of those which she might enjoy. *It is time then that this should revert to its natural order.*' This indirect manner of notifying to Louis that his kingdom was about to be taken possession of was more galling even than the famous formula by which Europe was informed that the king of Naples had 'ceased to reign.' Louis was not even honoured by a mention. To the Emperor it was simply a question of geography, and no more. From the moment that Holland was nothing but a 'portion of France,' the 'natural order' was not difficult to discover. It was merely a return to the mother country.

Such was the form employed by Napoleon for making known to Louis that he had disposed of his kingdom. Simple convenience was henceforth to be sufficient motive for a conquest. Louis's first impulse, on seeing the snare into which he had fallen, was to escape to Holland; but he perceived that he was watched. Some days later, as he was about to leave his mother's house, where he had alighted on reaching Paris, he was stopped by *gensd'armes d'élite*.[1] In this extremity he sent his equerry, Comte de Bylandt, to Amsterdam, with an order to close the gates of the fortresses, and especially of the capital, to our troops.

This order was executed. Despite the dregs which he had swallowed from his brother's hand since his elevation to the throne, Louis, in the depths of his heart, still wished to reign. His ministers moreover advised him to submit, in order at least to preserve to their country a nominal independence, which one day might become more real. Consequently he declared himself ready to accept every condition the Emperor might choose to impose upon him. Napoleon then consented to give way. In a letter dated December 21, 1809,[2] after a long statement of his grievances against Louis, he offered to restore his crown, in exchange for an undertaking on his part to prohibit English commerce, to maintain a fleet of fourteen vessels and seven frigates, an army of 25,000 men, and to suppress the titles of nobility and the marshals. But when according him this favour for the time being, he took care to add: '*I do not conceal from you that* it is my intention to unite Holland to France as the most fatal blow I can strike at England.' He even showed him, ready drawn up, the decree ordering the union.

This decree Napoleon had for an instant been on the point of publishing. But just as he was about to carry his threat into execution, he either feared to meet serious resistance in one portion of Holland, or he foresaw the bad effect that would be produced in Europe by a conflict which had already made too much noise; so he determined to

[1] *Documents historiques sur la Hollande*, by King Louis; vol. iii.

[2] This letter, a most remarkable one, has not been inserted in Napoleon's correspondence.

postpone his project. In his desire to turn this great sacrifice to some account, he thought of using the simple threat of annexation as a means of influencing and forcing England to peace. The idea was not new to him. He had several times made use of this species of intimidation; he had several times declared to the negotiators of that power that England would force him to conquer the Continent, in order to arm it, he said, throughout its length and breadth against her; in reality to arm it against himself. Now he would say to the English, Make peace, or I will annex Holland. If the negotiation were to succeed, would it not be a masterpiece of diplomacy to have obtained peace from England, not in exchange for any present advantage, but with a view to avert a contingent danger? If it failed, he would have a fresh pretext for invading Holland, and, in any case, would thus gain sufficient time to avoid precipitation or violence which might be equally compromising.

To have any chance of being listened to, his call upon the good-will of England should emanate from King Louis. It was to save him from the imminent danger which threatened him and his kingdom that England was to be asked to forget all her old grievances against the invader of Italy, of Switzerland, of Spain, of Portugal, and even of Germany. Consequently, it was in the name of Louis and of the Cabinet of Amsterdam that the appointed negotiator, M. Labouchere, a rich Dutch banker, son-in-law and partner of Baring, the great English banker, started for England in the beginning of February 1810. Baring was intimate with Lord Wellesley, the elder brother of Wellington, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and hence the reason that Labouchere had been chosen. But from the simple fact that Labouchere could only speak in the name of the Dutch Cabinet, the conditions he had to offer England could not be peculiarly acceptable. How in fact could it be supposed that members of a government, then in the zenith of its strength and power, burning with the ardour of the passionate struggle they were sustaining for the liberty of Europe, would allow themselves to be turned aside from their task through fear of the annexation of Holland, or would make

peace in order to preserve a throne to King Louis, as if they did not know that Holland was long since united to France, virtually if not by legal right, and as though they had not other interests at heart incomparably more important?

Such overtures were pitiful, and do little honour to Napoleon's political genius. They prove moreover, what can also be seen by the everlasting declamations in the *Moniteur*, that he had no clear idea of the real situation of England. He considered her to be in the last stage of distress and on the point of succumbing, when, on the contrary, she had never been more resolute. She desired peace, it is true, but far less than we did, for the simple reason that she was suffering far less from the effects of the war.

To induce England to treat seriously, had she been willing to come to terms, concessions were needed very different from the ridiculous offer of saving Holland. Apparently it was some feeling of the inutility of so ill-conceived a mission, quite as much as his own tendency to meddle in everything, that urged Fouché, unknown to his master, simultaneously to open a negotiation with the English Cabinet. Evidently foreseeing the very probable failure of Labouchere, he hoped, in his stead, to present Napoleon with a treaty of peace, wanting nothing but his signature. Certain it is, at any rate, that Fouché's agent in broaching the subject to the Marquis of Wellesley, submitted at least some sensible and acceptable proposals, even though accompanied by others that were purely chimerical. The agent, an old Irish officer of the name of Fagan, in the service of Condé, was presented to Wellesley by Lord Yarmouth. He informed the minister that if England were desirous of peace it could easily be concluded on the basis of the restoration of the Bourbons in Spain, with some compensation to Louis XVIII., to be made at the expense of the United States of America. The latter arrangement was a pure dream, but no absolute decision had been come to on any point, and he professed himself ready to discuss any terms that England might propose.

Fagan's overtures preceded Labouchere's by some days.

Lord Wellesley politely but distinctly declined them, on the ground of their bearing no official character and being made on no sufficient authority. As to Labouchere's proposals, he did not regard them as the result of intrigue, still he could with difficulty consider a negotiation serious which was based on nothing but Napoleon's clemency towards Holland. England in no wise ignored that Louis in Holland was only another name for his brother; she did not want to prevent Napoleon unmasking himself; on the contrary, it was her interest to urge him on in the path of usurpation until he should thereby rouse the whole world against him.

The English public had been furious at the shameful issue of the Walcheren expedition, but a dishonourable peace would have excited their indignation far more. Lord Chatham's conduct had been the subject of a parliamentary inquiry, and he had been obliged to resign his appointment as director-general of artillery. In short, that ignominious failure, without actually causing the downfall of the whole Cabinet, threw out two of its principal members, Canning and Lord Castlereagh, who had to settle their quarrel by the celebrated duel in which Canning was wounded. Still, despite the inevitable complaints of mismanagement, with which the opposition filled Parliament, the nation was more irritated than uneasy or disheartened. Lord Wellesley, who had succeeded Canning, was in no wise responsible for the faults of the previous administration, and he was popular, thanks to his great services in India, and also to some reflection of his brother's renown. Of a highly enlightened mind, moreover, and perfectly free from prejudice, he was not suspected of sharing either the views of former ministers, whose first aim would be to avenge the humiliation of Walcheren, nor, on the other hand, the interested zeal of the opposition in favour of peace. No English statesman, therefore, was better qualified to act impartially.

He listened to Labouchere's communications with the most perfect courtesy, but quickly perceived that their avowed object—namely, the desire of nominally preserving to Holland an independence which had long since ceased

to exist in reality—could form no serious basis of negotiation with England. Moreover, Labouchere was not empowered to support the proposals by any except vague assurances, for the sincerity of which there was no guarantee, as he could only speak in the name of the Dutch ministers. No prudent government could venture to excite public opinion on such uncertain data, by hopes probably impossible to be realised, or to check the ardour of the nation for war at the very moment it was beginning not to feel the burden. England was becoming accustomed to a state of war, and even derived great advantages from it, which went far to compensate her for its inevitable evils. If peace were desired, he should speak decidedly in the name of France, and offer clearly defined conditions, not overtures that were neither distinct nor accompanied by any guarantee. Labouchere obtained nothing but this verbal declaration, to which he added his own observations on the state of public opinion in England, in every way coinciding with those of Wellesley.[1]

This reception, however, did not prevent Napoleon returning to the charge of the British Cabinet, though on the next occasion he restricted the negotiations to an understanding on the subject of the blockade. England was to withdraw the Orders in Council of 1807, in return for which the Emperor was to evacuate not only Holland but the Hanseatic towns, restoring to the English all their markets on the Continent. If this was not definitive peace, it would at least be a great step towards it. In the instructions sent to Labouchere, an attempt was made to prove that 'France was not suffering in any way from the actual state of affairs.' But in the absence of other facts, was not his very persistence a proof of the contrary? And if there were a semblance of equity in the offer of a simultaneous withdrawal of the blockade, could the English be ignorant that on their side it was most efficient, reducing all the navies of continental states to complete inaction, while on his it was eminently

[1] *Note de communication verbale* of the Marquis of Wellesley to M. Labouchere, February 12, 1810. *Compte rendu de* M. Labouchere, February 12, 1810.

fictitious, in no way hindering their trade, but, above all, doing great injury to his allies? Napoleon's note ended by a few words which admirably defined the spirit of his system: 'From not having made peace sooner,' he said, 'England has lost Naples, Spain, Portugal, and the market of Trieste. It is evident that if she delays it any longer, she will lose Holland, the Hanseatic towns, and Sicily.'[1] To have given expression to his whole thought he ought to have added Prussia, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia, for such was the necessary consequence of his system. And this forced conclusion, far from frightening England, would have overpowered her with joy, by allowing her to foresee the inevitable downfall, at no distant day, of a mind extravagant enough to form his plans in so wild a fashion.

The second proposal met with no better success than the first. The moment had arrived for carrying out the threats about which so much noise had been made, and for coming to some decision with regard to Holland, still in suspense as to her fate. Even during the course of Labouchere's negotiations fresh complications had taken place in Louis's position. Napoleon had successively learned that entrance to our troops had been refused at Berg-op-Zoom and Breda, and that Krayenhof, the Minister of War, had fortified Amsterdam. This serious news reached him at the very time when he fancied he had definitively overcome his brother's obstinacy. It threw him into a positive paroxysm of rage: 'Has the king of Holland become perfectly mad?' he wrote to Fouché. 'You will ask him if his ministers have acted by his orders or of their own accord; and you will declare to him that if it is of their own accord, I shall have them arrested and have all their heads cut off.'[2] Unhappy Louis, who had hitherto been alternating between fear and anger, submission and rebellion, was still at Paris, at the mercy of his dreaded brother. His budding desires of war to the knife were not supported even by his ministers, who were too deeply impressed with the

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, March 20, 1810.

[2] This letter, quoted by M. Thiers, and dated March 3, 1810, has not been inserted in the *Correspondance*.

uselessness of such resistance. On this occasion he recognised the necessity of yielding, if he wished to save even a portion of his kingdom. He therefore threw open the fortresses, requested Krayenhof and Mollerus—the only two ministers who advised that the independence of their country should be defended to the last extremity—to send in their resignations, and declared himself ready to submit to the will of the Emperor.

Napoleon was thus brought back to his project of annexing Holland, and he held to it more strongly than ever; but not having yet (March 1810) lost all hope of coming to some understanding with England, he dreaded the effect of too noisy a scandal. Besides, scarcely three months had elapsed since Montalivet, as Minister of the Interior, had once again solemnly declared in a speech 'that he might easily have extended the limits of France beyond the Rhine, *but that that river was the invariable margin of the states bordering on his Empire.*'[1] He therefore preferred a middle course, which, while placing Holland in his hands, would still keep up appearances and yet give him the right to finish off the matter whenever he pleased.

By a treaty which he had to sign on the 16th of March 1810, Louis undertook not only to fulfil the conditions previously stipulated—as to the blockade, the maintenance of the army by sea and land, the marshals, and the nobility—but to accept a state of vassalage that was worse than an abdication. He gave up to the Emperor all that portion of Holland which is situated on the left bank of the Rhine, as far as the Wahal, and which formed one-fourth of his kingdom. He consented to allow his kingdom to be garrisoned by a French corps of occupation; he received all his custom-house officials from France; he handed over to the Emperor the right of decision on maritime prizes; and lastly, he undertook to place under sequestration every American vessel then in his ports.

This last stipulation was the anticipatory application of a decree published a few days later (dated March 23, 1810), and by virtue of which all American vessels entering any

[1] *Exposé de la situation de l'Empire*, December 12, 1809.

port of the French Empire from the 20th of March 1809, and onward, were to be seized and sold. This spoliatory measure was one of the most characteristic features of the continental system. After the decrees of Berlin and of Milan, and the reprisals of the British Council in 1807, all the mercantile navies of Europe had fallen under this interdict. The trade of neutrals thereafter could only be carried on in the Mediterranean under the Turkish, and on the ocean under the American, flag. But since England was obliging all neutrals to pay her a toll, either in London or at Malta, and Napoleon had declared every vessel denationalised that submitted to this formality, a series of intolerable vexations to American commerce was the inevitable consequence. It was almost impossible practically to distinguish vessels which had submitted to British control from those which had evaded it, and all being liable to suspicion, the innocent often suffered for the guilty. With the view of sheltering themselves from pretensions that were equally tyrannical on both sides of the Channel, the United States, not being powerful enough to enforce respect for their flag from every other country, had, by an order dated March 1, 1809, prohibited their merchant navy from entering the ports either of France or of England. By a just act of reciprocity, they ordered the seizure of every French or English vessel which might touch at American ports after the 20th of May 1809. The measure was undeniably frank and loyal. We were advised of it two months and a half beforehand; moreover, we had but a very restricted number of ships at sea, and if, as Napoleon affirmed, one or two had been confiscated for infringing the order, it arose from their having voluntarily exposed themselves to seizure. However, even this was afterwards proved to be false by Armstrong, the American minister, and in reality there had not been a single confiscation.

It was under pretext of using reprisals against so just and deliberate an act, that Napoleon, without any preliminary notice, though at the same time giving his decree a manifestly retrospective effect, seized several hundred American ships, which, in defiance of the orders of their

Government, had continued to frequent our ports. Not only did he in no way warn the Americans, but he had them seized many months before the publication of the decree in France, in Italy, or in Spain. He had subsequently attracted them anew by sending assurances to their ministers, 'that France would receive the American vessels when she was certain that they had neither paid tribute nor been denationalised.'[1] Then appeared the decree which showed them, but too late, the snare in which they had allowed themselves to be caught. Another no less painful surprise still awaited them. The decree pointed only to France, her colonies, or those countries occupied by her troops; the Americans consequently believed themselves safe everywhere else. But Napoleon caused them to be seized not only in Holland and the Hanseatic towns, but in Denmark and Sweden, nay, even in Prussia, where he offered to accept their cargoes in reduction of the debt.

General Armstrong's complaints were answered by hypocritical lamentations on the dire necessity in which Napoleon found himself of seizing a booty amounting to some hundred million francs. England alone was responsible for so grievous a state of things; but as for him, he was ready to rescind his two decrees of Berlin and of Milan if she would consent to rescind her Orders in Council of 1807. Besides, the embargo was placed on American vessels only as an act of reciprocity, and such vessels were not worthy objects of interest, as they were in direct contravention to the laws of their country. Napoleon, by way of justifying the kind of trap of which the Americans found themselves the victims, allured to the French ports as they had been by a certain amount of tolerance, wrote as follows: 'You will explain to Armstrong that the law of embargo has only recently been known to us, and that as soon as I became aware of it I adopted the same measure.'[2] Nothing could be more false than this assertion, proof of which is to be found in all the previous correspondence of the Emperor on this subject. Armstrong might have sent Champagny in

[1] Draft of a note to the American minister, January 25, 1810.
[2] Napoleon to Champagny, March 20, 1810.

reply a note signed by him, written on the 21st of August 1809, and containing the following passage: 'With the view of eluding those acts of violence with which our commerce is threatened, *America has placed an embargo on her ports*, and although the interests of France are hurt by the measure, the *Emperor nevertheless applauds this noble determination to renounce all trade rather than acknowledge the dominion of the tyrants of the sea.*' Thus, according to Champagny's admission, the American embargo had been known in France fully eight months previously.

Of all the clauses of the extraordinary treaty which Napoleon forced upon his brother, the seizure of the American ships was one of those which tried King Louis's good faith most severely. The treaty itself was both ridiculous and impracticable. Its conditions were so onerous as to render it impossible to observe them strictly; in a word, its only aim was to permit its author to seize Holland whenever he might so wish. When Louis complained of the impossibility of doing all that was demanded in a country so ruined and with finances so heavily encumbered, Napoleon coolly retorted that he need only become bankrupt by reducing his debt one-third. Louis obstinately refused to have recourse to a measure which he considered dishonourable. Under such circumstances he would have acted wisely in abstaining from signing such a treaty, and his acceptance of it can only be explained by the state of trouble and weakness to which the Emperor's violence had reduced him. At any rate he only ratified it on condition of adding the expression '*as much as possible*'—a conditional formula which proved the little confidence he felt in the validity of the engagements he was contracting:[1] nor was it long before his presentiment became realised.

King Louis returned to his capital on the 11th of April 1810. Towards the end of the same month, the Emperor, with Marie Louise, started on a journey through Belgium and the two Dutch provinces lately united to the Empire. Labouchere's negotiation with the British Cabinet, just as it seemed about to expire from lack of encouragement, had

[1] *Docum. histor. sur la Hollande.* By King Louis. Vol. iii.

taken a somewhat more favourable turn, owing to a new intervention by Fouché, in a question which in no manner belonged to him. That audacious and restless personage, emboldened by the impunity of his first intrigue, and beholding with sincere regret the failure through our fault of the pacific proposals, the success of which seemed to him certain had they been presented with moderation and skill, conceived the wellnigh incredible idea of substituting his own views for those of the Emperor. This time however he employed the same negotiator, flattering himself, should he succeed, that he would wrest from Napoleon the sacrifices essential to the prospect of an immediate peace, and then obtain absolution for himself by the grandeur of the results.[1]

To attain his object he sent a mutual friend to Labouchere, a contractor named Ouvrard, a kind of financial adventurer, ever ready for any intrigue, and he gave him instructions conceived in a much larger sense than before. These instructions could inspire Labouchere with no distrust, for Ouvrard was himself persuaded that Fouché was acting under the Emperor's orders. The negotiator on this occasion permitted discussion on every point debated between France and England, not even excluding Spain, Holland, or even Naples. Moreover, Fouché returned to his proposal relative to the United States, insinuating that he could make peace at their expense by sending an Anglo-French army to America.[2]

Napoleon was visiting the towns of Belgium with a brilliant court, inspecting, according to his wont, all the great industrial and administrative establishments, encouraging works of public utility, and distributing favours of all kinds to the multitudes that thronged his road, when he learned that Labouchere, although back again in Holland,

[1] One is justified in believing, according to a conversation related by Mollien (*Mémoires d'un Ministre du Trésor*, vol. iii.), that Fouché for an instant thought of mixing up some of his colleagues in the negotiations, with a view of acting with more certainty on Napoleon.

[2] See on this point a note of the police reproduced in Napoleon's *Correspondance*, dated July 9, 1810.

was continuing to negotiate with the English Ministry, and had frequent conferences with Ouvrard. On the instant he made the negotiator's correspondence be sent to him by King Louis. It was delivered up to him the more readily, that Labouchere believed he was merely reproducing the Imperial inspirations. To his intense astonishment, the Emperor then discovered the new turn which had been given, without his knowledge, to overtures made by him in a completely different sense. Labouchere's good faith was evident, but it was doubtful whether he had been deceived by Ouvrard or by Fouché. Napoleon was unwilling to believe his Minister of Police guilty of so audacious a proceeding. On his return to Paris he instantly sent for Fouché, whom he vehemently upbraided for such felony; the latter, however, throwing all the blame on Ouvrard, Napoleon immediately ordered Savary to arrest him also, and finally, in this manner ascertained beyond doubt that Ouvrard was nothing but an unconscious instrument of Fouché's manœuvres.[1]

In the first outbreak of passion Napoleon thought for a moment of having his imprudent minister tried for high treason; but on reflection he no doubt perceived that a far more ridiculous than alarming impression would be produced by so strange a revelation, not only throughout Europe, but even in France. What would become of the *prestige* of the imperial autocrat when he was seen to have been thus deceived by his own agents, and when it was known that he who made kings tremble had been duped by so bold a servant, who, in his zeal, had substituted the inspirations of his own wisdom for the chimeras of his master's genius? Moreover, it was not easy to strike a man who, since the 18th Brumaire, had been the confidant of so many secrets and the accomplice of so many suspicious or bad actions. Fouché after all had not been guilty of

[1] Compare on the subject of this singular intrigue Savary's account with the *Mémoires* of Ouvrard and of Mollien, and M. Thiers' History. Ouvrard asserts that he had informed Napoleon of the negotiation he had been entrusted with, but he brings no proof to support this assertion.

conspiracy; the negotiation which he had opened could effect no result unless it were approved by Napoleon, and if that result had been favourable, who would have dared to blame him? He was in fact only guilty of having shown too much good-will; he had prejudged the Emperor's intentions now, as he did at the period of levying the national guard; and as on that occasion, so now, he had calculated on being pardoned by success. He had injured no interest whatever; Napoleon's self-love alone had been touched, and if his insane pride had been capable of listening to the indirect advice given him by Fouché, how could a happier conclusion or a more advantageous bargain be imagined for France or for Napoleon, than a peace which would have left him the Rhine and Pyrenees for his frontiers, with almost the whole of Italy, and would have liberated his brothers from the hard labour of royalty?

These considerations, prompted as much by a spirit of calculation as of indulgence, had more weight in saving Fouché than the intercession of his friends or the recollection of past services. He thus escaped complete disgrace and probably an ignominious sentence, and was merely dismissed from office, receiving however as a consolation the governorship of the Roman states. But just as he was about to start for his new post, the Emperor discovered the whole mystery of the Fagan negotiation, hitherto unknown to him. This time he had no mercy. Dismissed anew, Fouché was ordered to retire to Aix, in Provence, whence he derived his senatorial rank, and to give up all the papers belonging to his office that remained in his hands. But Fouché answered that he had burnt them, and for a moment thought of flying to America to elude the vengeance he dreaded; finally however he thought better of it, and resided quietly and in obscurity in the retreat assigned to him.

As Fouché's successor in the Ministry of Police Napoleon appointed Savary, whom he called a 'man of action,' and who indeed had figured as principal actor in the two most odious episodes of the Emperor's life, the execution of the Duc d'Enghien and the arrest of Ferdinand of Spain. The

news caused a deep and painful sensation in Paris. In his memoirs, which are a masterpiece of historical falsification, disguised beneath a veil of good-nature and military frankness, Savary, in the following terms, himself describes the effect his appointment produced upon the public mind. 'I inspired universal terror; every one at once prepared to be off; nothing was spoken of but exile, imprisonment, nay even worse; in short, I believe that news of the plague having broken out on some part of the coast would not have frightened people more than did my appointment as Minister of Police.[1]

It would be impossible to describe the universal impression more correctly. Savary's advent to the Ministry of Police resulted in making Fouché more popular. Every one knew that however cruel the latter might have been, it was chiefly owing to fear, as in so many instances during the Reign of Terror, but that by nature he was more humane than otherwise. Nor was any one ignorant that on many occasions he had softened unduly harsh orders in their execution, and by skilful temporising had saved Napoleon from many useless cruelties. In short, even his cynical, scoffing scepticism, his long experience of men and things, his old instincts of a worn-out, fault-finding revolutionist, seemed to be the warrant of a certain independence of mind. It was felt that he passed judgment on his master; that Napoleon would never be to him a religion, as he was to those then called 'Mamelukes;' that he was capable of resisting him to a certain degree, nay, if need be, of mystifying him, and would never submit to be merely a passive and blind instrument in his hands. Savary, on the contrary, was the man of orders and implicit obedience. He openly boasted of his unlimited attachment: hence the fear he inspired was equally unlimited.

The Emperor's relations with his brother had not improved since Louis went back to his capital. It is easy to conceive the sentiments with which that poor king returned to his subjects after a journey which had cost them two provinces, a foreign occupation, and the intoler-

[1] *Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo*, vol. iv.

able vexations of our customs system, not to mention the other conditions of a disastrous treaty. Louis's submission could have no excuse either in his own eyes or those of the Dutch, except the hope that he might compensate for such deep humiliation by the importance of his services. They could pardon him but on one condition—namely, that he would use every effort in his power to soften the severity of the compact he felt constrained to sign in order to preserve to them some remnant of national existence. All the old difficulties however continued, aggravated by fresh complications arising from the military occupation, and now supplemented by that of the customs.

King Louis carried out his promises regarding the nobility and the marshals to his brother's entire satisfaction; but although doing his best to raise the navy he found it impossible, with his exhausted exchequer, to satisfy the demands of the treaty. That, according to him, was a question of time. He did not refuse to increase his army to the standard agreed upon, but contended that allowance should be made for the troops he maintained in Spain on the Emperor's account. The American ships he consented to give up, but not those of the Dutch which had borrowed the flag of the United States. He did not oppose the establishment of our line of custom-houses along the coast of Holland; but when the French agents, penetrating into all the small inlets of the sea in the interior of the country, arrogated to themselves the right of inspecting all the produce of Holland herself, thus adding the petty vexations of the local tolls to those of the custom-house, and at last instituting commissions to try the delinquents, the king protested against such an usurpation of his rights, and set at liberty all who had been arrested. The fewer were the prerogatives left to him, the more he insisted on making them respected. He could not, it is true, venture to show any resentment against the Emperor, but he thought his rights as sovereign might perhaps permit him to abstain from any sign of cordiality. Consequently he received the *chargé d'affaires* of France, M. Sérurier, with marked coldness. Without in any way pretending to retain ministers

who had displeased the Emperor, he still considered he was fully entitled to write them some words of condolence, as he did for instance to Mollerus ; and lastly, he dared to use his royal privilege by dismissing the burgomaster of Amsterdam, who had opposed the fortification of that town.

Herein King Louis deceived himself: his power did not extend to this point, so strange was the kind of royalty which had been created for him. The Emperor's letters grew more and more imperious and threatening ; 'the die is cast,' writes Napoleon to him under date of May 20, 1810. 'You are incorrigible. . . . Neither counsel, advice, nor affection, must be shown to you ; nothing but menace and force. What are all those prayers and those mysterious fasts which you have ordered? *Louis, you do not want to reign for any length of time ;* all your actions betray the sentiments of your mind far better than do your private letters. Listen to one who knows more about it than you do. Turn back from the wrong road you have taken ; be a Frenchman in heart, or your people will drive you away, and you will leave Holland an object of pity and of derision to the Dutch. States are governed by the aid of reason and policy, *and not by acrimony and weakness.*'[1]

Such cruel aspersions on a brother announced clearly that Napoleon had resolved not to show him any further consideration. Two days later, on May 23, 1810, he learned that Louis had, at a diplomatic audience, passed over Sérurier, the *chargé d'affaires*, without addressing a word to him, and that a coachman in the ambassador's livery had been beaten in a street row. He wrote to Louis a second time, overwhelming him with the most cutting reproaches, terminating his letter in the following insulting terms : 'Write me no more of your commonplace phrases. You have now been repeating them to me for the last three years, and every day proves their falseness. This is the last letter I shall write to you during my lifetime.'[2]

[1] This letter has not been published in Napoleon's *Correspondance.*

[2] This letter, as undoubtedly authentic as all the others I have above quoted, is, in like manner, omitted in the *Correspondance.* So many and such grave omissions sufficiently attest the spirit of partiality

After such treatment illusion was no longer possible, and King Louis's last doubts vanished at sight of the

and of extravagant apology in which that collection has been formed. It is, however, none the less precious for history, from the fact that its authors, while suppressing and mutilating many important documents, have not always understood the sense or bearing of those they have allowed to remain. But while restricting themselves to the reproduction of such documents exclusively which the Emperor would himself have consented to be published, in accordance with the singular order imposed on them by their President, Prince Jerome Napoleon, the editors of the *Correspondance* might at least have dispensed themselves from adding manifestly false ones, fabricated at St. Helena to meet the exigencies of the case. I have already passed judgment in a previous volume on a pretended letter of Napoleon's to Murat, supposed to have been written on March 29, 1808, the authenticity of which is absolutely untenable, but which for fifty years has deceived historians. The editors of the *Correspondance* have reproduced another letter, deriving it from the same source—namely, the *Mémorial de Las Cases*, which does still less honour, if possible, to their scruples and critical acumen. That letter, published by Las Cases in the *Mémorial* as having been communicated to him by the prisoner of St. Helena, is supposed to have been addressed to King Louis by the Emperor, under date of April 3, 1808. It presents all the characteristics of an historical falsification, and does not stand examination for an instant. Not only is it dated from the château of Marsac, where the Emperor arrived only a fortnight later and left no trace of any document in the archives —especially noteworthy in the case of such an unusually long document —but its tone and style are in such marked contrast with all the other letters written by Napoleon to his brother Louis at that period, that it is sufficient to read it after perusing the others to perceive at once that it is a purely apocryphal document. While pretending to treat of an insignificant act of smuggling, it is in reality an interminable and verbose defence of the continental system and of the good intentions of the Emperor. He who never had any but hard words and harsh counsels for his brother, complaisantly speaks to him 'of the goodness of his heart, of the simplicity of his manners, of the love which the Dutch bore him.' He prides himself on his kindness and impartiality even towards England: 'Every day I feel that peace is becoming more necessary. (This was at the very time when he was preparing the treachery of Bayonne!) I have neither passionate dislike nor unconquerable hatred against England. . . . England may be rich and prosperous, I care little, provided that France and her allies be so likewise.' Instead of addressing his brother directly, as in other letters, he gives him the title of 'Your Majesty,' which he never did except in official communications. Lastly, in the same degree that his usual style is brief, precise, and solid, this long harangue in favour of

increasing number of French troops sent to take possession of his kingdom under his very eyes. By the terms of the

the blockade is vague, diffuse, and drawling. It is clear, that if it was written by the same personage, it was so only long after the events, based on half-effaced recollections, with totally different objects in view from those of the moment when it is supposed to have been penned. At that period, in fact, Napoleon was, above all else, occupied with the Spanish affairs, and he had but just written to Louis offering him the crown of Spain; only five days had elapsed since he had made him that offer (March 27, 1808); he was impatiently expecting his answer, and certainly was in no humour to send him a discussion of the kind, as declamatory as it was useless. In addition to all this presumptive moral evidence of the falsity of the letter of April 3, 1808, I can cite a *positive fact*, which clearly proves its defective authenticity. The Emperor, with the view of justifying the blockade, recalls to his brother that '*all the navies* of Europe have been destroyed' by England; adding, 'Russia, *Sweden*, France, and Spain, which have so many means of possessing vessels and sailors, do not venture to risk one squadron outside their ports.' Is it not strange that Napoleon here ignores that *Sweden*, far from having then joined our system, was at war with us, as well as with Russia, and that Bernadotte was marching with an army against her, while England, instead of having destroyed her navy, was paying her a subsidy of thirty million francs? They forgot at St. Helena that Sweden did not make peace with us until nearly two years later. It is stated, moreover, in the same letter, and in consequence of the same mistake, that Portugal was about to submit, and that, as a result of such submission, '*the entire seaboard* of Europe would be closed to the English, with the exception of *Turkey*'—a second instance of forgetfulness on the subject of Sweden, no less inexplicable than the first, if we admit the authenticity of this letter. But however one may understand Napoleon's mistake, when labouring, at a distance from every source of information, to reinstate his reign in public opinion, and to alter facts that must have oppressed his memory, such inadvertence is inconceivable on the part of men who have undertaken the mission of clearing up facts of history. The editors of the *Correspondance de Napoléon* might have raised a monument to truth; but they have too often produced nothing but the work of partisans. And, singularly enough, while following with eminent docility the programme traced out for them by Prince Jerome, they were only carrying out Napoleon's own idea. The writer of these lines has under his eye the beginning of a copy of the *Correspondance* corrected by Bourrienne by the Emperor's orders, from which all dangerous or troublesome passages had been carefully effaced. This work, which only reached to the middle of the campaign in Italy, left the timid alterations of the editors of the *Correspondance* a long way behind. It would have rendered all the falsehoods of St. Helena utterly useless.

treaty, their number was not to exceed 6000 men; but it already amounted to 20,000. Instead of limiting themselves to guarding the coasts, as had been agreed upon, they successively took possession of every town, and the circle they traced round Amsterdam became smaller and smaller day by day. Several times, King Louis relates, the general commanding tried to entice him to an interview between Amsterdam and Utrecht, but he prudently declined the proposal.

The troops soon approached the capital. The king demanded explanations from the French *chargé d'affaires*, who answered him by declaring in an official note 'that in consequence of the rumours which had reached his Majesty the Emperor and King, attributing to him intentions of placing a garrison in Amsterdam, his Majesty had desired him to deny such intentions, and to declare that he had no idea of occupying the capital.'[1] This same order was however given a very few days later by Napoleon, as soon as he had ascertained that the capital could not have time to place itself in a state of defence.[2] Oudinot was to assign as a reason 'the insult offered to our eagles at Haarlem,' and Sérurier was to 'hint that the only method of extricating themselves from the mess was to receive the French troops at Amsterdam.' According to another letter written by Napoleon himself,[3] the insult offered to our eagles simply consisted of a 'refusal to allow our *patrols* to pass.' But at the point now reached any pretext was sufficient to bring matters to a crisis. In view of the danger now pressing him, Louis once more summoning his counsellors proposed to them to defend Amsterdam to the last extremity, and to call the nation to arms. But they respectfully represented to him the inutility of such a defence, and the misfortunes which such a course would entail upon their country.

Holland was too much oppressed and exhausted any

[1] Note of Sérurier, addressed to Roell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, dated June 16, 1810.

[2] Napoleon to Champagny and to Clarke, June 24, 1810.

[3] To Champagny, June 27.

longer to possess the energy necessary for such a struggle. King Louis, disheartened and undeceived, decided on abdicating in favour of his eldest son. He embodied his justification in the form of a farewell message addressed to the Legislative Body, in which the following touching passage occurred: 'Perhaps I alone am an obstacle to the reconciliation of the country with France. Should this be so, I might find some consolation in dragging on the remainder of my wandering and languid life at a distance from the first objects of my affection. . . . As for you, gentlemen, I should be very unhappy could I think it possible that you would not do justice to my good intentions. May the end of my career prove to the nation and to you that I have never deceived you; that I never had but one object in view, the interest of the country, and that the faults I may have committed are solely due to my zeal, which made me desire not only what was good, but the best that could be attained, despite the difficulty of the circumstances.'

After the preparation of this message, King Louis, accompanied by a few servants who remained faithful to him, fled with the utmost secrecy, passing our troops with some difficulty, and escaping from his kingdom as if from a prison. The people are generally good judges of the character of their sovereign, especially if he be a foreigner, and King Louis's memory is cherished in Holland as that of an honest, kind-hearted man. His virtues too should be the more honoured, because to them alone he owed all his misfortunes.

Quitting Haarlem during the night of the 1st of July 1810, he never stopped until he reached the baths of Tœplitz in Bohemia, where he arrived on the 9th. For nearly a whole month Napoleon, and every one else in Europe, was ignorant of what had become of the unhappy king who had fled like an outlaw. His disappearance, which authorised every sort of conjecture, still further deepened the injurious effects of his flight, in itself so condemnatory of Napoleon. Such a rupture foiled all the Emperor's plans. He had flattered himself that he could

have carried on his enterprise to the end without noise or scandal, and have gently stifled Louis's protests within the four walls of some magnificent and solitary residence; but if we may believe Savary, he seems to have been completely overpowered and disheartened by the news. The mask of wisdom and moderation which he had assumed on marrying Marie Louise fell down suddenly, and he reappeared in all his violence, as a usurper and an oppressor of the rights of his own family. By a coincidence singularly annoying to him, another of his brothers, Lucien, who had hitherto been living in the Roman States, considering his residence no longer safe since their union with France, escaped by sea at the very same period, preferring to risk being made prisoner by the English to remaining the subject of Napoleon. Even Joseph, despite his taste for the honours of royalty, seems to have been on the verge of following their example. On the 8th of August 1810 he wrote to Napoleon: 'If the arrangements with which I am menaced are carried out, I shall have no choice left but to return to France . . . to regain in obscurity those affections and that peace of which the throne has deprived me, without giving me anything in exchange; for Spain to me is nothing but a place of torture.' That Fouché should be traversing Italy as a fugitive to elude the Emperor's vengeance, or that General Sarrazin should fly from Boulogne in a fishing boat, though with the certainty of falling into the hands of the English, might up to a certain point be explained; but how heavy must his yoke have become, when it was intolerable even to his brothers, deeply interested as they were in supporting him!

Europe learned from a simple imperial decree, inserted in the *Moniteur*, and dated July 9, 1810, that Holland henceforth formed part of the territory of the Empire. The pretext offered in vindication of this outrageous act was the necessity for closing the country against the English, and of rendering the continental blockade more effective. But how was it possible not to perceive that similar motives might be urged against every European state, and that all must have felt their existence menaced

in the same manner? The Roman States had been annexed to France in the previous month of December. Holland therefore was the second country of which Napoleon had taken possession within six months, by a sovereign decree of his will, without feeling himself bound to account for it to any one. The only notification which he thought fit to make to foreign powers was to inform Russia that a mere change of persons had taken place, as for some time past he had virtually been master of Holland. So long as it suited him to maintain a shadow of government in conquered countries, as in Naples, Westphalia, or Spain, he asserted that such states continued independent. On the day when it pleased him to take possession of them, he as peremptorily asserted that such independence had never been more than nominal, without troubling himself about so flagrant a contradiction. In the present instance, even to his own relatives, whom he could not hope to deceive, he threw all the responsibility of this unfortunate event on his brother Louis's bad health, writing on the 20th July to his mother and to Jerome that 'all his conduct is inexplicable, and can only be attributed to his state of illness.' Many years afterwards, in his confidences at St. Helena, he still attributed what he called Louis's oddities to the wretched state of his health; and bewailing the obstinacy which had made him ultimately fly from a throne, and mistake uproar for renown, he adds, 'What alternative was left me? Could I have abandoned Holland to our enemies, or was I to appoint a new king?'[1]

It would result from these retrospective lamentations that Napoleon had most reluctantly been forced to annex Holland. The narrative of facts has proved the light in which the pretence of such an obligation ought to be viewed. Napoleon sent to Holland, as representative of his government, the former Consul, Lebrun, who had become the Imperial *Architrésorier*, a Byzantine title which sufficiently well defined the personage himself and the services expected from him. Prince Lebrun possessed all the qualities of an excellent prefect, and nothing else

[1] *Mémorial* de Las Cases.

was needed in order to rule Holland. The Dutch did not long remain in doubt as to the nature of the reproaches cast by Napoleon on his brother's administration. The first benefit conferred on them by the Emperor's representative was the bankruptcy of three-quarters of the public debt, although such bankruptcy was falsely veiled under the designation of reduction to one-third, for the State creditors instead of receiving eighty were assigned only twenty millions. This was what Napoleon in his letters to Lebrun called 'the economy which ought to result from the union.' According to his calculation this reduction of the public debt was only a first act of economy, and he added, 'The Legislative Body will be another item for reduction; foreign affairs another; the Council of State a third; and the Civil List a fourth.'[1] All these different items of economy and reduction could in Holland be summarised in one, namely, the economy of her liberty and her national independence. No doubt there is nothing less expensive than slavery, but at the same time nothing more unproductive, more sterile, or more ruinous, and had the Dutch been consulted they would have answered at once that this economy cost them too dear; for it cost them their country.

[1] Napoleon to Prince Lebrun, July 23, 1810.

CHAPTER VIII

LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS OF 1809 AND 1810—CREATION OF THE *DOMAINE EXTRAORDINAIRE*—THE STATE PRISONS—SEIZURE OF MADAME DE STAËL'S WORK ON GERMANY—THE DECENNIAL PRIZES

(*December* 1809–*October* 1810)

THE Legislative Body had at this period wellnigh attained perfection in the performance of the part which Napoleon had long since mentally assigned to it. It had caused itself to be so rarely spoken of, that one scarcely knew whether it was still in existence, and almost the whole of 1809 had passed by without any one perceiving that the Body representing the nation had not held its customary session. It was impossible for that assembly to give any better proof of its being animated by the spirit which had presided at its transformation; but, by a misfortune that seemed attached to its very existence, its docility and actual insignificance served it no better than its former ambition. Though no longer called dangerous, it was considered useless. Whenever the Legislative Body was now mentioned in the Emperor's presence, he exclaimed against the folly of such an institution. All the most important laws, in fact, appeared in the form of decrees or of a Senatus-Consultum, and most frequently the Legislative Body was not called upon even to ratify them. The only occupation left to it was the revision of the Code originally framed in the Council of State, or the making of laws for some local interest; even then, there were bitter complaints of the delay to which such laws were subjected, as if they could

have been voted by an absent Body. In general the Assembly passed every project presented by Government without any discussion whatever. The official returns of the sessions of 1809 and 1810 are less than a twentieth part of one session in the present day; moreover, at least one half of those short sittings was devoted to the examination of works presented to the Legislative Body by the writers of the day, with the evident intention of filling up their leisure hours.

Were no other defects attributable to the Legislative Body, it sinned by reminding France, from its name alone, that she formerly had possessed a national representation. That was sufficient to condemn it, and henceforward it was treated with a contempt that foretold the near and definitive suppression of so troublesome an excrescence. The session opened on the 3d of December 1809. Some fifty of its members, whose service was expiring, were to be re-elected on the 31st; but a Senatus-Consultum appeared dispensing with the useless ceremony, and deciding that the Deputies should remain in the Chamber, not only during the session of 1809, but also in that of 1810. Again, new departments had been added to the Empire, and Deputies ought to have been elected by them, but another Senatus-Consultum saved them alike electoral trouble and all embarrassment as to choice, by enacting that these Deputies should be appointed by the Senate. Nor was this all. The session of 1809, short though it was, had necessarily to be prolonged into the first month of 1810, in consequence of the delay that had occurred in its assembling: what use then would there be in convoking it anew or in making another opening speech in 1810? These were only so many complications —and for so little! It was decided, therefore, that the session of 1810 should immediately follow that of 1809, both making but one, without requiring all the empty show which gave the public such false notions of the importance of the Body. Lastly, with a view to complete the degradation of this unfortunate Assembly in the eyes of France, the Emperor appointed his Grand Chamberlain Montesquiou to be its President, when the presidential chair was vacated

by Fontane, on his appointment as Grand Master of the University. The national representatives thus found themselves associated with the service of the Palace in the person of the man whose duty it was to make their rights respected.

The labour of this double session of 1809-1810 might, however, have done honour to the last days of the Legislative Body, had that body been something more than a mere simple registry of the Imperial will. But long and cruel experience had convinced the Deputies that the slightest symptom of criticism or of reform with regard to the Government projects, even those most unconnected with politics, only resulted in irritating their master, and in causing those matters to be ordered by decrees which ought to have been decided upon by a law. They confined themselves therefore to a dull and unvarying approbation of measures that were contrary to every principle. The Emperor had acted in this manner when, on his private authority, he ordered the canals belonging to the State to be sold, under pretext of applying the produce of such sale to the completion of the new canal works undertaken in various directions. The Legislative Body hesitated to give its approval to such an illegal alienation of so precious a portion of the State property, whereupon Napoleon passed them over by issuing simple decrees (dated May 17 and August 10, 1809), and the Legislative Body, obliged to submit, converted a measure into law which it most justly considered a spoliation of public property.

The summary discussions on the Penal Code, which latter was adopted in bulk with scarcely any preliminary debate during the course of the session of 1810, offers a still more striking example of their compulsory submission. All the criminal lawyers of the time repudiated the penalty of confiscation as iniquitous and immoral, not only because it visited the crime of the father upon the children, but also as in a certain sense giving the executive an interested motive for the discovery of culprits; a dangerous temptation, when power is represented by one man. Napoleon himself, when restoring to several of the *émigrés* property of theirs which had been confiscated by the Revolution, had

participated in the feeling of reprobation which had resulted from the abuse then made of that penalty. But as he had condemned it merely in the hope of gaining partisans, it was perfectly consistent with his character that he should wish to preserve it for the purpose of frightening his enemies. He loudly declared in the midst of the Council of State[1] that he would never deprive himself of so formidable a weapon, and the lawyers of the Council gave way, as usual, to his will. Had there still lurked even a shadow of independence or dignity in the bosom of the Legislative Body, it would have been shown in this instance, for the opinion of all enlightened men was unanimous in condemnation of punishment by confiscation. So low had it fallen, that the public now never viewed those as criminals who were struck by the law, but reserved their anger for the judges who applied it. From a philosophical and social point of view it at least afforded a subject for discussion of the highest interest.

The project was presented by Treilhard, who in a few disdainful words refuted the objections raised against confiscation. 'It is objected,' he said, 'that the punishment by confiscation descends upon children who could not have been accomplices in their father's crime. *But who shall suffer for the faults of the father, unless it be his children?*' In virtue of the same inference, it would be quite as just to make them share in the punishment of death. A few days later, the reporter of the Legislative Commission, Daubersaert, in his turn declared that confiscation was an excellent mode of punishment, and infallibly efficacious. 'An ambitious man,' he said, 'does not think only of his own personal elevation, he thinks of labouring for posterity, and exposes himself for the sake of his family. The fear of reducing his children to poverty is a stronger motive than death for restraining his parricidal arm.'[2] No voice was raised in the Assembly to confute these singular theories, and although the general feeling was eminently opposed to

[1] Sitting of January 20, 1809.

[2] *Archives parlementaires*, published by Mavidal and Laurent. Sitting of February 2, 1810.

the maintenance of confiscation as a punishment, it was nevertheless inserted among our penal laws. The Bill presented by Treilhard, which filled one entire book of the Code, was adopted in silence, at the end of a report consisting of a few pages, by two hundred and twenty-five votes against thirty-five,[1] without one protest, one observation, nay not even one word that might have informed the world how, on this as on many another occasion, it was the will of one single man which had prevailed against the feeling of a whole nation.

But why should one wonder at this silence on so apparently inoffensive a question? If confiscation were expunged from our Code, would it not be equivalent to condemning it abroad as well as at home, and what would become of the finances of the Empire without the resource of confiscations in foreign countries? We do not here allude to the enormous contributions which Napoleon levied on vanquished nations; but in addition to such tributes, which, as he expressed it, ought to feed war, and which balanced his budgets, what riches flowed into his coffers merely from confiscations! Princely domains seized in every country for the benefit of the Imperial Crown, or to serve as gifts to his generals, the property of the grandees of Spain sequestrated, the sale of Spanish wools, the seizure of English merchandise, of American vessels, of the property of the Italian clergy, and of many confiscations that were never accounted for! All such measures, classed as exceptional, had become of constant and regular occurrence; they yielded receipts upon which it was the habit to calculate; how then was it possible not to regard confiscation as a permanent and universal practice?

The Legislative Body would have acted with so much the greater impropriety had it rejected the question of confiscation, from the fact that the Emperor had but recently presented a law for the approval of the Senate, the principal aim of which was to give a sort of legal sanction, under the title of *domaine extraordinaire*, to this corrupt source of revenue. Hitherto the Emperor had appropriated to him-

[1] *Archives parlementaires*. Sitting of February 12, 1810.

self the free disposal of all the prizes of victory, at first under the designation of 'exterior receipts' (*recettes extérieures*), and then under that of 'treasury of the army' (*trésor de l'armée*). He had considered himself the legitimate owner and sovereign dispenser of all property acquired by the blood of our soldiers; and had disposed of it as he pleased, without allowing any one to control the use he made of it, or to dare to contest the right he was pleased to assume to himself. And this was not the least outrageous of his usurpations. But it was perhaps better for public morality that the nation should appear to ignore exactions which she could not prevent, and that he alone should be responsible for iniquity of which he alone was guilty. Now, however, the possession of this right *de facto* no longer contented him, and he demanded that it should be conferred upon him by a law. In other words, he desired that the whole nation should participate in the responsibility without being allowed to share in the profits, which were to continue exclusively at his discretion.

The creation of the *domaine extraordinaire* was part of a collection of arrangements which were to end in increasing the public and private fortune of the Emperor to an extravagant degree. The Bill presented to the Senate on the 20th of January 1810, and voted by it on the 30th without any discussion, confirmed, besides the *domaine extraordinaire*, the endowment of the Crown, and the private estate, appanage, and endowment of the Princes and Princesses. Inheriting an ill-defined state of things, by virtue of which the Crown property most frequently absorbed the National property, the Constituent Assembly in 1791, acting upon true principles, had restored the Crown property to the National estate, deciding at the same time that the sovereign should only enjoy its life-use and possess a civil list in money alone. The Assembly wished the sovereign to have no interest separate from that of the State. The Empire, in 1804, had adopted, in all its entirety, the law of 1791. No one would then have dared to assign anything to the Emperor beyond his civil list and the usufruct of the ancient Crown property.

Since then, the Emperor had seized in the countries he had conquered numberless palaces and estates belonging to their former sovereigns. The Senatus-Consultum now united all these acquisitions to the Crown property. While declaring the inalienability of this estate, it at the same time made it a property distinct from that belonging to the State, which lost all right of disposing of it. The Emperor, on the contrary, in addition to his civil list and the enjoyment of the Crown property, was to possess a private income, derivable either from such acquisitions, or by inheritance, or from sums allotted to him—in short from the personal property of the Crown over and above thirty million francs. He might dispose of it as he pleased 'without being tied,' said the Senatus-Consultum, 'by any provision of the Code.' It is only too easy to imagine the constant temptation thus offered to increase the private property of the sovereign at the expense of that of the Crown and the State. 'But! exclaimed Regnault de St. Jean d'Angély, in his statement of the motives which suggested this arrangement,—'suppose the Emperor should regret the pleasure attached to the possession of a private estate, could any one be angry at his thus envying his subjects? and if the monarch were susceptible of this sentiment, or rather let us say this weakness, would a law be just which would force him to choose between the sacrifice of his tastes and that of his duty?'[1]

To sanction such weakness by law was undoubtedly an excellent method of anticipating its possible occurrence. 'Besides,' added Regnault, 'this was a most disinterested act on the part of the Emperor; he thought of it merely for his posterity'—which as yet existed only in the Bill; 'and his thoughts, which embraced the whole world, had never rested on the charms of individual property. His Majesty no doubt has noticed examples of the kind and can conceive its possibility, but he never, I believe, has himself experienced the feeling.' The Senatus-Consultum which Regnault presented, and which placed the riches of many nations in the hands of one single man, seemed to accord little with this piece of delicate flattery. The creation of

[1] *Archives parlementaires.* Sitting of January 20, 1810.

the *domaine extraordinaire* was justified by other considerations of even less weight. The orator admitted that at every epoch and in every nation all that had been gained by conquest had been merged in the Crown property, or, in other words, in that of the State. The Emperor not only abrogated this ancient usage, but it was looked upon as a claim for additional gratitude; 'for,' said Regnault, 'the Emperor finds the income of the Crown sufficient for all his wants,' and if he retained this property it was with a view to administering it and distributing it amongst his companions in arms. 'Providence had arranged in this manner for the wants of the French army, and had further been enabled to create rich reserves and to preserve vast estates in those countries where our eagles had been planted. . . . In short, it had converted the laurel into a fertile tree, on the fruit of which our brave soldiers fed, while its leaves crowned their brows!'[1]

It is impossible to give an idea of the real tone of events without some quotations from the speeches of the day, which would amply prove the grotesque and at the same time degrading language to which despotism had succeeded in lowering men who ranked amongst the best and most enlightened of their generation. Regnault especially insisted on the necessity of 'interesting every soldier in the preservation of property which belonged to all, by insuring to the army a share in the fruits of victory.' The *domaine extraordinaire* was, in fact, more or less intended for this object, and the measure in consequence had not contributed to raise the tone of our army. Despite the admirable generosity and disinterestedness which the army at heart preserved, dating from the first wars of the Revolution, it had on more than one occasion presented the spectacle of one fighting for booty. But the character of its commanders especially suffered from the contagious effects of such ill-gotten wealth; and Napoleon, who was now applauding himself for having found a species of corruption which should insure their docility, was at a future day to repent bitterly of having in this manner given them interests separate from his own.

[1] *Archives parlementaires.* Sitting of the Senate of January 20, 1810.

The day in fact did come when he exclaimed, in utter discouragement, 'They will no longer fight, I have made them too rich!' And what right had he to blame them for a selfishness which he had encouraged both by suggestion and example? Berthier alone had thus acquired an income of 1,350,800 francs, Davout of 910,000, Ney of 728,000, Soult of 305,000, Masséna of 500,000 francs, etc.

The *domaine extraordinaire*, however, was far from relating exclusively to the endowments of the army. It also comprehended gifts destined to keep alive the zeal of high civil functionaries, or to reward the devotion of certain privileged personages, many of whom belonged to the ancient aristocracy. The sum total of such endowments, civil and military, at the end of 1810, amounted to 28,327,472 francs, without including gratuities that were almost equivalent in value. The *domaine extraordinaire* had, moreover, served to endow different public establishments, to erect monuments, and, above all, to supply the deficit annually created in the budget by war. To meet all these expenses, there was real estate of which the revenue was valued at about forty million francs. As to personal property, it seems from an official return of December 31, 1810, that at that date the receipts of the *domaine extraordinaire* at the end of our three last wars amounted to 754,257,174 francs. This return, however, is far from being exact, for the sums which are there stated to represent the seizure of British merchandise or of Spanish confiscations are infinitely below the real amount of the receipts under those heads. The expenses having amounted to a sum of 433,030,228 francs, there remained a fund in hand of 321,226,946 francs.

The largest portion of these expenses had been absorbed by war. No year passed without Napoleon renewing his engagement in presence of the Legislative Body not to increase the taxes and to maintain the budget at the immovable figure of 730,000,000. Still, despite his skill in making foreign countries feed his troops, he exceeded the resources of his budget in times of war by nearly a hundred millions, and this breach in his finances he

repaired by capital drawn from his *domaine extraordinaire.* The Ministers never failed on such occasions to observe that it was his bounty which enabled them to supply the deficiency of the budget, just as if the money had been taken from his private patrimony. And yet, when he tendered as payment contributions of the kind derived from the enemy, was it not rather the nation which was in reality paying with its blood, instead of paying with its coin?

This pretended fixity of the budget was, after all, nothing but outward show intended to deceive the simple-minded public. It suffices to cast one look at the budgets of that period to perceive that the unvarying figure of 730,000,000 was maintained solely by the aid of a most dishonest artifice, which consisted in the habit of carrying expenses hitherto borne by the State to the account of the departments and communes. Owing to this subterfuge, the general taxes ostensibly remained the same, while all the local taxation was increased with impunity. The departments and communes were burdened, not only with the heaviest portion of the expenses relating to public worship, but also with half the salaries of the prefects and sub-prefects, the support of lunatic asylums, of mendicity houses, of the establishments for foundlings, expenses which had previously been defrayed by the budget.

This culpable deceit, conceived with the view of withdrawing from the nation the faint shadow of control which had been left to it over financial matters, had been effected by a decree,[1] like every other measure which was of a nature to exercise any active influence on the progress of affairs. And this was not an accidental whim on the part of the Government, but an absolute and invariable system. The Legislative Body still made laws, but it obeyed decrees which overruled the law itself and deprived it of all effectual authority. If any measures had been, at all times and in every country, considered within the domain of the law, such assuredly were all those relating to the liberty of the individual, of the press, of printing and publishing. But these questions were withdrawn from legislative control

[1] Dated June 11, 1809.

with as much care as had been bestowed on the recent redistribution of the budget or the creation of the *domaine extraordinaire*, Napoleon deciding them by decrees which arbitrarily organised State prisons, a censorship, and a director-generalship of printing and publishing.

The only matter for astonishment in all this is, that he should have thought it proper to take so much superfluous trouble, when he had so long been in the habit of doing everything without hindrance which now was authorised by these new decrees. For a long time past he had caused every one he chose to be arrested, imprisoned, or exiled; he had suppressed writings, expelled the writers, prohibited journals, closed printing-offices, without rendering the smallest account of such proceedings to any one. It is needless here to recall facts which have been already proved; and it is easy to imagine how obscure individuals, defenceless in all save their rights, must have been treated by a man who held a Pope under lock and key, and through his police agents expelled even women from Paris who had become obnoxious to him for their independent opinions united to beauty, wit, and genius. Now, however, this power was no longer sufficient for him, and he required that such odious acts of tyranny should appear to be the effect, not of his own will, but of the law.

Even in 1809 he had desired the Council of State to prepare him a Bill for the re-establishment of State prisons. This Bill was drawn up and presented, without being preceded by any preamble. The bare fact was announced in the most concise terms; despotism without any disguise. The Emperor himself shrank from the impression which such a document would produce, and in the full Council of State gave utterance to a truly sublime sentiment. 'I must,' he said, 'have two pages of clauses containing *liberal ideas!*' Here was one of those characteristic expressions which, better perhaps than any of his victories, explain the Emperor's wonderful success, and his extraordinary ascendency over the French mind. Oh! how well he understood his unhappy nation—ever duped by words, and the never-ceasing prey of every kind of charlatanism! What exulta-

tion and what imprecations had filled the world on the subject of the Bastille and the *lettres de cachet!* What blood had been shed for its destruction! what enthusiasm lavished on its victors! It was not now the inoffensive Bastille of the feeble Louis XVI. which it was sought to re-establish, but eight Bastilles erected and distributed over the whole surface of the Empire, and at the discretion of a suspicious and inexorable potentate. But they were restored in the name of 'liberal ideas,' and that was sufficient to make the entire world bow. Not one protest was heard. No! not even one murmur. The man who had been carried in triumph on the day of the taking of the Bastille, was he not now *Senator Count* Hulin? What more could be desired? was not that the whole aim of the French Revolution?

However *liberal* the clauses might be which formed the preamble of the decree regarding the State prisons, they could not ignore the too-well-known fact that a large number of political offenders were detained in the prisons of the Empire. But it was not in order to aggravate their fate that the State prisons were now to be opened to them. Far from it! On the contrary, the preamble drew attention to the fact, that if they were given over to the ordinary forms of justice 'they would be condemned to *capital punishment.*' Consequently, it was with the view to protect them from execution that it was sought to avoid putting them on trial. It was also added that a certain number of such culprits 'could not have been condemned by the Assize Courts, even though they were *certain* of their guilt,' which signified that there were no proofs against them, but that, notwithstanding, it was desirable they should be kept in prison. A third category regarded police officials employed abroad who had failed in their duty, but who could 'neither be set at liberty nor brought before the tribunals without compromising State interests.' For all such unfortunate individuals as were outside the meshes of the law, it was desired to institute '*legal* and *solemn* forms,' intended to insure an impartial examination of their cases. Such legal and solemn forms consisted solely in the necessity for

'a decision of the Privy Council' on the subject of each imprisonment, 'based on the report of the chief Judge or of the Minister of Police.' Every year the list of State prisoners was to be brought up to the Emperor, and the detention of each was to be authorised 'at a new Privy Council.'

An annual revision, made by a Council composed of the familiar friends and most intimate servants of the Emperor, was in fact the point to which the guarantees so solemnly granted to the State prisoners had now dwindled. One single fact stands forth clearly from behind all this pretended form of procedure, namely, that the Emperor had the right to cast into prison, and to keep him there, without trial, whomsoever he might please. The decree was none the less proclaimed as a signal favour; and to render the illusion more complete, it was published in the very number of the *Moniteur* which contained the first felicitations from the great bodies of the State on the occasion of the marriage.[1] It was put forward as a bounty to the people, and was viewed in that light. However, these ridiculous arrangements were never observed. The one single article of the decree ever applied was article 28, requiring that there should be eight State prisons, and that they should be established in the Châteaux of Saumur, of Ham, of If, of Landskron, of Pierrechâtel, of Fenestrelle, of Campiano, and of Vincennes—a list which alone shows how the benefit had been extended to every part of the Empire, both old and new.

The decree regarding the press, the censorship, and printing, suggests the same reflections as that on the prisons. It might have been said that arbitrary action once sanctioned by a decree was about to change its nature and to become legitimate, and that abuse of power when done according to rule appears more respectable than as an exceptional and illegal proceeding. The Press had hitherto been subject to the good pleasure of the Emperor and his police; this was not altered under the new decrees; but it seemed that these abuses, adorned henceforward with an

[1] *Moniteur* of March 5, 1810.

appearance of legality, were to be practised by virtue of a higher authority; to such a degree does respect for the law act even on those who counterfeit it and convert it into a lie. The Emperor was moreover discontented with the use which Fouché often made of his discretionary powers. Fouché was indulgent, partly by nature, and partly by premeditation and calculation. Many a time, during the constantly recurring absences of the Emperor, had he saved unfortunate authors from harsh measures, by intentional delay in carrying them into effect. In this he frequently followed his own inspirations, and showed himself capable of maintaining his opinion. The Emperor often accused him, singularly enough, of 'not having sufficient law in his head,' or of wishing to gain popularity at his expense. Certain it is, at all events, that one of the apparent objects of the decree was to withdraw the jurisdiction over the Press from him, in order to give it to the Minister of the Interior; an arrangement, however, which in no wise hindered Savary from taking it back the moment he succeeded Fouché in the Ministry of Police.

In the somewhat long discussion which took place in the Council of State on the draft of the decree, the orators who supported the measure, and the Emperor amongst the number, spoke of the Press as a 'mode of instruction' and a 'social institution,' instead of treating it as a right belonging to the citizens by which they could make known their opinions, express their thoughts, and, if need be, expose their grievances. The Emperor went even further, stating that it was a '*public function*.' Hence it resulted that every one who made use of the Press became a species of official, under the eye and under the control of the State, the instrument and interpreter of its will, and responsible to it. And only by virtue of a patent issued by the State was it possible to publish one's opinions, for the State possessed the right of stopping and suppressing everything adverse to its interests or which it might deem inexpedient.

The consequence of such principles was the restoration of the censorship in all its integrity. But, with a view to disguise this ill-concealed return to the old *régime*, the

Emperor wished the office to be declared *facultative*, that is to say, that every author who should voluntarily submit his works to the censorship, and obtain its approbation by making whatever erasures it might demand, should be secure from any further harsh proceedings. But this term was almost as fraudulent as the *liberal* clauses of the decree on the State prisons; for all writings, no matter of what kind, were none the less subjected to a preliminary censorship, as every publisher was bound himself to call the attention of the censors to every book he was publishing. Moreover, an article of the same decree stipulated that even after the censorship had given its *satisfecit*, the Minister of Police still had the right to seize the work. The decree, in addition, established a Director-Generalship of the book-trade, which was placed under the orders of the Minister of the Interior. Its particular duty was to keep watch over the publishers and booksellers. Portalis, son of the former Minister of Public Worship, and a young Councillor of State, who had made himself remarkable during the deliberations of the Council by the violence of his opinions against the Press, was the Director chosen by Napoleon. The publishers as well as the booksellers were licensed, made to take an oath, reduced to a strictly limited number, required to produce certificates of their good habits of life and manners, and, in short, subjected to a series of incredibly minute declarations and proofs.[1] The penalties for infringement were confiscation, imprisonment, and fine. There was, however, one case in which the law bore but lightly on the publisher and vendor of an offensive work, and the Penal Code had itself taken pains to define the ground for such indulgence; namely, whenever the publisher or bookseller should consent to give up the name of the author. In that event, they were to be rewarded by the clemency of the law, and were liable to none but the most trifling penalties (Art. 284 and 288 of the Penal Code.

Notwithstanding the state of languor, or rather annihilation, into which the periodical Press had fallen, it could not fail to receive its share in the distribution of Imperial

[1] See in the *Bulletin des lois* the decree of February 25, 1810.

favours. It was surprising, considering the many blows levelled at the newspaper Press since the 18th Brumaire, that any writers were still found to act as editors; and the enormous burdens they endured can only be explained by their small number and by their very trials, which protected them from competition. Not only were they forced to pay from their own pockets the censor who kept guard over them, but it was even from their sources of revenue that the Emperor paid all the pensions which he granted to learned men and men of letters, upon which he afterwards prided himself so much, when he was pleased to enumerate all that he had done for the encouragement of literature, of science, and of the arts. An editor might unexpectedly learn that the Emperor had in some sort mortgaged his paper, by making it responsible for one or more pensions of six, eight, or ten thousand francs; he had, however, but to submit in silence, too happy to be still permitted to live, while by this method, simple as it was economical, this grand protector of literature took his place in history alongside of Augustus and Louis XIV. Moreover, he thereby compassed another object which he must have equally cherished, namely, that of making half the men of letters live at the expense of the other half, of setting them one against the other, of rendering all union and common action between them impossible; in short, of interesting the authors themselves in the debasement of their noble profession.

One blushes to confess that men such as Bernardin de St. Pierre, Chénier, and Monge consented to accept this tax upon the labour of their more humble brethren.[1] In spite of such onerous trammels, accepted too with unbounded docility, the political journals which still preserved a small remnant of life, thanks to the moderation of the police, were in the opinion of the Emperor far too numerous and too independent. He decided that in future there should be but one journal in each department, except in that of the Seine, and that that one should be published by the

[1] See the return of these pensions in a letter from Napoleon to Montalivet, January 3, 1810.

authority of the Prefect and with his approbation. In other words, this was simply decreeing that henceforth there should be no newspapers in France but official ones. Then, somewhat later, it became no longer a question of a tax being imposed on a paper in the form of a pension, but the Emperor handed over the entire proprietorship of the paper itself to some one of his favourites, without in any way indemnifying its dispossessed owner.

Although these decrees, so favourable to the arbitrary action of the Government, were obligatory on authors, they were not so in any way on the power which had framed them. Napoleon never showed the slightest anxiety to shape his conduct accordingly, and this law, like every other, remained subject to his good pleasure. His subjects might find it an increase of severity, but they could discover no guarantee in it, and it was no sooner made public than he hastened to violate it with a cynical and brutal contempt for the rights which he still allowed to exist. A few months had barely elapsed since the publication of the decree, when he ordered the police to seize and suppress the work on Germany by Madame de Staël.

That illustrious woman had recently come to the neighbourhood of Paris to correct the proofs of her book. She resided near Blois; in other words, as Sismondi said, at the *constitutional distance* of forty leagues. She had voluntarily submitted to the formality of the optional censorship. Esménard, the censor, was one of those literary men whom the Empire had taught how to make a large income for himself by oppressing literature; a man of whom Savary could say in his Memoirs, 'I attached him to me, and he has served me faithfully.' This man had carefully examined the work. He had cut out all the suspected passages which his singularly refined sense of servility could find in it. For instance, he had required the suppression of such bold assertions as the following: 'Paris is the spot in the world where it is most easy to dispense with happiness.'[1] The sentence had no doubt

[1] See in the book on Germany the passages suppressed by the censorship.

seemed factious, for it appeared to admit the possibility of not being happy at Paris. The permission to print the book had been given, and an edition of 10,000 copies was coming out, when Savary's gensd'armes seized the whole edition at the publishers, and taking it to the mills it was transformed into cardboard. The sale of the cardboard produced twenty louis, which Savary, with that exquisite tact for which he was so distinguished, transmitted to the publisher in compensation for the loss of his expenses. This right of seizure, even after the imprimatur of the censor had been granted, had in fact been reserved in favour of the Minister of Police, like a last threat for ever suspended over the heads of authors; but the decree of February 5 stipulated that in such cases the Council of State should be immediately called upon to examine the affair. However, there never was a question of referring this crime to the Council. Simultaneously with the seizure Madame de Staël received an order to quit France in four-and-twenty hours. She thereupon wrote to the minister imploring a delay of some days, but expressing at the same time her supposition that she had doubtless been punished for not having made any mention of the Emperor in her book. To this Savary answered: 'You must not seek for the cause of the order I have signified to you in the silence you have observed regarding the Emperor in your last book; that would be an error. *He could not find a place in it which would be worthy of him*, but your exile is *the natural consequence* of the line you have been following for these many years past. *It seemed to me that the air of this country does not suit you*, and we are not reduced to the necessity of seeking for models in the people you admire. Your work is *not French*, and it was I who stopped its publication.'[1]

No more need be said of a system when it is proved that a man like Savary, the hero of so many base and foul

[1] Savary's letter, dated October 30, 1810. See *Dix ans d'Exil*, by Mme. de Staël, the Preface to *L'Allemagne*, and the Correspondence of Mme. Recamier. It is necessary to read what Savary says of this episode in his Memoirs, to have some idea of his trickery.

deeds, found himself in a position to assume this tone of command and contempt towards a woman whose genius was an honour not only to her time and to her country, but even to humanity itself. And what was the new crime of which Madame de Staël was accused? It would be difficult to define it even now, and it is easy to understand that Napoleon should have shrunk from the necessity of explaining in any public document the cause of the blow, cowardly as it was cruel, by which he had struck her. Since the month of September 1803, the period of her first exile, she had never reappeared in Paris; she had merely come to its neighbourhood when about to publish *Corinne*, but had almost immediately received an order to leave it again. Subsequently she had travelled in Italy, in Switzerland, and in Germany, ever true to her liberal opinions, but never giving expression to them, except in private conversation.

Her book on Germany, full of new views and keen original observation—which in their main points are still true, despite the inevitable changes that time works amongst nations as well as individuals—was for France a real revelation; nevertheless, it was strictly confined to a philosophic and literary sphere, and it is difficult to detect in it even the faintest allusion to politics. It was simply an initiation into a whole world of ideas and sentiments ignored by France. There existed at that time a sort of Chinese wall round our frontiers, not only in commercial but in intellectual matters; and the prohibition against works full of thought, maintained by prejudice as much as by despotism, had impoverished the French mind and rendered it barren. Our literature was dying of languor beneath the twofold oppression of a system that was hostile to all interchange of ideas and of a literary orthodoxy alike narrow and formal, which having long since ceased to extort admiration by the brilliancy of its works, had no longer any means of defending itself except intolerance. It was a state literature, moulded in some sort upon the political society of the day; having its habits, its official forms, its types proper, outside of which it did not allow itself to

think or to feel. It possessed the uniformity and dryness, and withal the discipline, of an administration. None of the characteristic features of our national mind were to be found in it, for it assiduously reproduced forms which were not alone old, but lacked the life which had once animated them. For this reason the fashionable authors of that day, the Delilles and Fontanes, show marvellous skill in style, but an almost entire absence of inspiration, while neither vigour nor originality exists except in those writers who had breathed foreign air, such as Châteaubriand, Joseph de Maistre, Madame de Staël, and Benjamin Constant. It became necessary for authors to adopt one of two courses; either to go elsewhere or to resign themselves to the elegant commonplaces of the orthodox literature. Did perchance a really gifted mind spring up in so ungrateful a soil, it was at once condemned to the torture of laborious fruitlessness, though bearing within itself all the ambition natural to superiority. Such was Joubert, a man possessing talents of peculiar delicacy, though of a sickly and affected kind, without character, fastidious to the last degree, abhorring the open air, light and movements of the world, incomparable as a dilettante, but a signal failure as a writer.

To open the boundaries of the French mind, and free it from the kind of intellectual prison within which it was shut up, to impart to it new ideas and fresh forms and spontaneous inspiration in poetry, in the drama, in philosophy, or in history, was to present it with the only species of regeneration it was possible to offer; and to restore to it, if not the old originality which had long since vanished, at least as far as possible its creative power. The possibility of this was shown by the magnificent bound it made when the Restoration flung down the barriers which had hindered the exterior air from entering. And it was for this awakening of the national mind that Madame de Staël had wished to prepare us, by initiating us into the intellectual *renaissance* of Germany at the end of the eighteenth century, by revealing to us new types, forms of beauty grown young again, a deeper sentiment of nature, conceptions that were profound despite their eccentricity;

in short, all those living springs of imagination and of thought that were called Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, Kant, Fichte, and Herder.

It was for having wished to insure us this benefit that Madame de Staël had been so harshly treated. In that respect Napoleon knew perfectly well what he meant, both in his hatred for the woman who personified all that he most detested in the world,—loftiness of thought, independence of character, nobility and pride of heart,—and in the outburst of brutal anger with which the fine work, whose suppression he had just ordered, had filled him. In truth, every description of emancipation holds its ground; and he who labours to elevate, ennoble, and vivify the spirit of a people, labours by that alone for its future liberty. Germany at that time offered a striking example of this truth. It was to those glorious chiefs of her intellectual *renaissance* that, at the expiration of her long lethargy in the eighteenth century, she owed the first sentiment of her national existence; and that sentiment was so strong as to survive all the blows which Napoleon aimed at it. He had cut Germany into fragments, had driven away or corrupted its sovereigns, destroyed its ancient institutions, and shot its patriots. But the Germans found a second country, so to speak, in their literature; which maintained national sentiment and nourished hatred against the foreigner. The mind remained free beneath the chain which bound the body, and their country rose up again in 1813 more full of life than ever. From this point of view it may be said that a man of peace like Goethe, hostile though he was to all warlike literature, effected more than a whole army for the liberty and the independence of his country.

But it was a gratuitous insult both to truth and genius to make the policeman write to Madame de Staël that '*her book was not French*' because it conveyed consolation to a nation unjustly oppressed. Every page of the book was impregnated by that pre-eminently French quality, generosity; that virtue which France has preserved throughout all her trials, and which has obtained for her the respect of her enemies; the sole inheritance, perhaps, which has never

been denied to a nation that created chivalry, and originated the crusades, the war in America, and that of our day in Italy. Yes! to the honour of a nation alternately slighted to excess and flattered beyond measure, history can testify that the voice raised in favour of the vanquished, the sympathies which consoled them in their defeats, the hand stretched forth to misfortune with words of hope and encouragement, were to be found in France; nay, even underneath the very sword of the conqueror. In France it was that men exposed themselves to be outlawed in order to show respect to the misfortunes of Germany. Some did not even limit themselves to this kind of generous intercession, and went so far as to deny their past, to take up arms against their mother-country, and voluntarily to sacrifice their memory and their lives to what they considered the cause of mankind. The Germans were the first to remark that Madame de Staël's observations on their national character sinned from being over-indulgent. They pointed out, not without a certain irony, her encomiums on German candour, simplicity, and good-nature, and the various criticisms in which her clear-sightedness was blinded by her generosity. A noble, touching exaggeration of a virtue of which they have since had the opportunity of showing us the true measure! . . . But they have not cared to add this lesson to the many others which they have given us.

The punishment which befell Madame de Staël was extended by degrees to the greater number of the friends who endeavoured to console her in her exile, such as Madame Recamier, Matthieu de Montmorency, Schlegel, and Barante, the Prefect of Geneva, abruptly dismissed for having paid her attention. The day came when, to escape such persecutions, she decided on submitting to the long and painful Odyssey of which she has left us so touching an account. In this manner was that small society of Geneva dispersed, so interesting for its activity of mind, and one of the last of those circles where men had dared to speak and think freely. In this manner did that hospitable, illustrious, though modest establishment disappear, where all that ranked as intellectual in Europe considered

it a point of honour to present themselves; where Benjamin Constant contributed versatility and variety combined with the most rare and faultless accuracy; to which Sismondi brought his solid good sense and his science as an economist and an historian, Schlegel his inexhaustible critical fancy, Bonstettin his caustic humour, Gerando his philosophical mind, Madame Recamier her grace and beauty, and Madame de Staël her grand soul, full of eloquence and inspiration, a sort of ceaselessly vibrating echo, reverberating to the sound of whatever was great and glorious in her age.

By one of those singular coincidences which the historian must never fail to note when they serve to elucidate facts, it was at the very time that Madame de Staël was banished like a criminal and her book thrown into the paper-mill, that a jury appointed by the Institute proclaimed the distribution of the Decennial prizes then recently announced with so much noise, and intended to revive the great ages of literature. The Minister of the Interior, in his *Statement of the position of the Empire*, had said, 'The Decennial prizes are about to be given by the very hand of him *who is the source of all true glory*.' There can be little doubt that the majority of the laureates must have abandoned their idea of seeking glory from any other source, as an ingenious act of flattery on their parts; for, although a few estimable names appear in the long lists, no single one belongs to a famous or even a durable achievement. Rulhière received a prize for history, Raynouard, Legouvé, Delrieu, Baour-Lormian and Lehoc for tragedy, Duval for comedy, Sainte-Croix and Villers for criticism, Delille for didactic poetry, St. Lambert and Julien for moral philosophy, etc.[1] Such were the authors proclaimed worthy of a public reward, at a time when persecution and insults were showered upon those whose character and talents were an honour to the nation. But posterity, which restores every

[1] See in the *Mémoires de l'Institut* the volume entitled *Rapports* of all the classes of the *Institut de France* admitted to compete for the Decennial prizes, November 1810. The *Moniteur* of July and August 1810, published long extracts from this *Rapport*.

one to his proper place, has plunged these names into the most profound obscurity, and has retained no recollection of any except those whom official servility passed over in silence.

The list of prizes bestowed on science presents the great names of Lagrange, Laplace, Berthollet, and Cuvier; truly illustrious characters, and full of merit that was above all reward, but the specific nature of whose labours was such that it could give no umbrage to the reigning power. It is however noteworthy that these eminent men had not only gained their celebrity at a period long since past, but that the prizes awarded to them were for works of a date long anterior to the Empire, of which the latter, notwithstanding, desired to reap the credit. A prize was adjudged to Lagrange for his *Calcul des fonctions*, published in 1797; for his *Mécanique céleste*, of 1798; to Fourcroy for his *Connaissances chimiques*, published in 1791; to Cuvier for his *Leçons d'anatomie*, published in 1802; to Lacroix for his *Traité de calcul différential et intégral*, of 1796; to Lacépède for his *Histoire des poissons*, published 1798; and to Berthollet for his *Statique chimique* of 1803. This fact did not escape the notice of the jury entrusted with the distribution of the prizes, for they rejected various works as too old, but relaxed in severity towards the above-mentioned, either because their authors had added another volume to them, or had published a new edition somewhat revised. It was by a fiction of this kind that Rulhière's history of *L'anarchie en Pologne* obtained a prize, although the author had died *thirty years before*. On this plan they might have gone back to Tacitus, the true historian of that day. They made the riches of the past contribute as much as possible to supply the poverty of the present, with a view to delude the dispenser of all fame into the belief that he was at the same time the inspirer of all talent.

But all these efforts at adulation were completely wasted. Either because the Emperor was struck by the insignificance of his Cæsarean poets, or that he considered his money better spent in defraying the expenses of the war, certain it is that he abstained from distributing the awards

of the jury, and nothing remained of the magnificent institution of the Decennial prizes but the recollection of a solemn mystification. If Thibaudeau, his apologist, is to be believed, Napoleon declared in full Council of State 'that his aim in founding them was merely to furnish employment which would prevent men from occupying themselves with more serious affairs.' However, what tends to prove that he considered his triumphal cortége of literary celebrities as rather paltry, is a note addressed to the Minister of the Interior,[1] in which he asks for the reasons why the Institute had not mentioned Châteaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*. It is tempting to infer that he wished to strengthen this select band, fearful that they should make a sorry figure in the eyes of posterity. He could not have liked Châteaubriand ever since his resignation at the time of the execution of the Duc d'Enghien, when the *Mercure* of which he was the proprietor was seized, in punishment of too bold an allusion; but he had a natural taste for his florid style, and for the element of exaggeration which pervaded his imagination, and willingly listened to his protectors Fontanes and Molè; and in addition, the *Génie du Christianisme* had the merit of having popularised the title of 'restorer of the altars,' to which Napoleon attached more importance than ever, since he had been at open war with the Pope. Châteaubriand, moreover, had just published his *Martyrs*, in which he reproduces and maintains the Catholic doctrine of the necessity of obeying the powers that be, even when founded on usurpation,—a doctrine which was not likely to displease the Emperor. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand Napoleon's indulgence, and his passing desire to enrol Châteaubriand in the phalanx of official celebrities.

[1] Dated December 9, 1810.

CHAPTER IX

EXCESSES AND FOLLIES OF THE CONTINENTAL BLOCKADE —ELECTION OF BERNADOTTE TO THE THRONE OF SWEDEN—LAST ANNEXATIONS OF TERRITORY

(*July–December* 1810)

THE solemnity for the distribution of the Decennial prizes had found Napoleon in the midst of preoccupations of so grave a nature that they sufficiently explain his contempt for that useless ceremony. The intolerable vexations of the continental system began to bear their fruits, and events that could not be remedied had taken place. Our allies, driven to extremities, were still restrained by terror, but the peace of Europe was in more serious danger than ever, and secret preparations were making in every direction for a gigantic struggle. When one sees the continental blockade so quickly producing its natural consequences, it is difficult to comprehend how historians have been found to admire so wild a conception, in which it is impossible to detect even any continuous system. We have seen how Napoleon contrived to close the ports, first of France, and then of the whole of Europe, to the English, subsequently to prohibit them to neutrals who should have submitted to the Orders of Council in 1807, and later to all neutrals without distinction, on the pretext that it was impossible to distinguish by any certain sign those who had refused submission to the British toll and those who had not. The result of this prohibition to neutrals was the seizure of the colonial merchandise wherever it was found, and that too by command. Napoleon, however, while taking upon himself to

impose these ruinous prohibitions on his allies, who submitted to them only from necessity, evaded them himself by the system of licences, first applied to certain products, and then extended to all colonial commodities.

Despite his denials to the contrary, these licences did introduce an immense quantity of merchandise into France. But such exceptions created fresh difficulties in the application of the continental system. How was it possible, in the seizures made by order of Napoleon, to distinguish between merchandise of a legal kind and that brought in by fraud? Moreover, there was in every market a no less considerable quantity which had been sold by auction after the confiscations, or from the prizes taken by our privateers, and which had thus obtained the legal stamp. How were all these to be distinguished from smuggled goods? Napoleon had been struck by another fact, no less important. After the annexation of Holland he had allowed the Dutch merchants to pass the colonial merchandise in their possession into France, on payment of a tax of fifty per cent, and notwithstanding this excessive charge they had disposed of their goods with extreme ease. From this he drew the conclusion that the payment of fifty per cent must very nearly represent the expenses and the profits of the contraband trade, and that it marked the limit to which he might with impunity raise the taxes on the other merchandise which he tolerated.

Such, as far as can be seen, was the motive which led to the rearrangement of the continental system effected by the Decree of August 5, 1810. It is impossible seriously to believe the motive alleged by Napoleon in the circular addressed to his agents abroad—namely, the desire to equalise the prices all over the Continent. To effect uniformity of the kind, the tax should first have been graduated according to each country. He changed nothing in his prohibitions against neutrals—they who continued to be refused entrance to every European port—but a tax of about fifty per cent was imposed upon all the colonial merchandise existing upon the Continent, no matter what might have been its origin; every merchant was bound to declare his possession of such property, and to pay the tax

either in money or in kind under pain of confiscation of the goods. Napoleon moreover declared that depôts of such merchandise situated within four days' distance from the frontiers of the Empire were considered clandestine, and as such became liable to seizure. He instantly marched French troops to effect these seizures in neighbouring territories, for instance, in Switzerland, in Frankfurt, in Spain, and in the Hanseatic towns, without the slightest regard for the interests of those states. Every European government was requested to conform to this new regulation, in terms so pressing as to amount to menace. Another decree, published under date of October 18, 1810, decided that all English manufactured merchandise should be publicly burnt. And as the ordinary penal laws, however harsh, were considered insufficient to insure the carrying out of such measures, a third decree[1] established a special jurisdiction with exceptional penalties for the repression of a crime committed by accomplices in every quarter. Seven *Cours prevôtal* and thirty-four special tribunals were established, the former to try first offences, the latter more serious cases, against contrabandists, smugglers, or receivers of goods, and to pass sentences upon them of death, hard labour, or fine. But repression was not considered sufficient; the instruments of such repression were also to be encouraged and rewarded; a proportionate share of the seizures was therefore given to the informers, soldiers, and custom-house officials who effected them.

These measures were carried out with the more remorseless severity from the fact of their bringing enormous sums into the Treasury, tenfold more than the deficit which the reduction in the amount of receipts from the Customs had caused in the Budget. The taxes paid in kind by the unfortunate merchants who had to give up half their goods when unable to pay in cash placed an enormous quantity of property in the hands of the Government, who then sold it on their own account. Nothing was to be seen but soldiers and custom-house officers in every direction, either forcing open the doors of magazines to search them and to seize

[1] Decree of November 25, 1810.

whatever they could there find, burning the prohibited merchandise in the public squares, or hunting those who had allowed themselves to be caught in some infraction of the law. Napoleon might in vain declare through his chambers of commerce, in addresses which they were made to issue, '*that the ashes of these piles would fertilise French soil*;'[1] individuals were none the less ruined by them, for, as Mollien has remarked, the loss of the merchandise thus burnt did not fall upon the English, but upon the French. It very much resembled the sight, indefinitely prolonged, of a village handed over to pillage by those who had undertaken its defence; with the sole difference, that these scenes, as demoralising for those who presided at them as for those who were the victims, were protected by the law and incessantly renewed. And for what end was such treatment enforced? What man of sense could believe in the efficiency of the Decree of August 5? How could any one avoid seeing that the tax of fifty per cent placed on merchandise which had already paid a heavy tax for the licences, or that levied on previous seizures, was in reality nothing but a premium given to contrabandists? that it sacrificed the honest trader to the smuggler, who, despite all the different hindrances, always found it possible to bring his goods to market at a far lower price?[2]

But these evils, however insupportable to the public or to individuals, were slight compared to the grave political complications which such measures were beginning to create abroad. Foreign Governments had submitted to the continental blockade most reluctantly, in order to escape complete ruin, but from the moment that the blockade brought them equally certain ruin, though under another form, it was clear that they would make every effort to evade it. How, in fact, could they find their way

[1] Address of the Chamber of Commerce at Agen, *Moniteur* of February 12, 1811.

[2] This is the opinion of Mollien, Napoleon's minister: 'By an inexplicable contradiction,' he says, 'these taxes gave more advantages to English trade than the prohibition deprived it of' (*Mémoires d'un Ministre du Trésor*, vol. iii.)

through the maze of contradictory regulations and decrees surrounding this pretended system, the author of which was the first to infringe them, and in which it was impossible to discover one well-connected thought, which, in a word, were but the madness of absolutism? No! although, with the knife at their throat they had resigned themselves to make war on England and to close their ports to her, they never could have undertaken to make war also upon neutrals, to let their people perish from inanition and want, or to obey every caprice of a man who was not bound by his own laws! If they could have made such a promise, it was nullified by the stain of violence upon it, and he was mad to calculate on its being fulfilled, for they possessed the right, and it was their duty not to keep it.

It were possible, no doubt, to understand that the Emperor might cherish such an illusion, if, while himself strictly observing the decrees, he had at the same time offered his allies some compensation for the privations he imposed upon them, by securing to them, for instance, the advantage of a customs union, which would have established an industrial and commercial identity of interest all over Europe. But there was no question of the kind, not even for countries immediately dependent upon him, such as Switzerland and Italy. Whilst sending 6000 men to Switzerland to seize the colonial merchandise there, he prohibited the woven fabrics and other manufactures of that country admittance to the markets of Italy. He also, by the excessive increase of his tariffs, closed the Swiss and German markets to the silks of Italy, with a view to draw the trade to Lyons exclusively;[1] the effect of which, as Prince Eugène remarked, was to ruin the Italian producers for the advantage of the Lyons manufacturers, who by this act were relieved from all competition.

In view of such facts, one might have said that Napoleon was taxing his ingenuity to increase the interest of every nation in infringing the continental system, for the purpose of finding a pretext in their resistance to justify his encroachments. The fate of Holland was a warning well calculated

[1] Napoleon to Prince Eugène, August 6, 1810.

to inspire them with salutary reflections. But the facility with which that revolution had been accomplished was at the same time a most dangerous snare to a man so quick to pass from menace to performance, and his enemies had just reason to hope that its success would encourage him to undertake new enterprises no less compromising. The European Governments were unanimous in their mode of viewing the new Continental measures which so grievously aggravated their situation, but for the most part they were not in a state to enforce their objections. They resisted the measures in proportion to the distance or the force which protected them from their terrible adversary. Prussia was not in a position even to complain; she submitted, in utter despair, without a protest. Denmark had her frontiers but a few marches distant from Davout's head-quarters; she required the Emperor's protection, moreover, against Sweden and Norway, and, in order to support her own pretensions to the succession of the king of Sweden, momentarily abstained from all opposition to the blockade, although it was most prejudicial to her interests. But Sweden, who found herself, in some degree at least, protected by the sea from any attack on Napoleon's part, made every possible effort to evade the application of measures that were a thousandfold more injurious to her than to France, from the inferiority of her own resources; while in so doing she was but following the example set by Napoleon himself. As to Russia, she alone in Europe spoke the language of an independent State, distinctly refusing to obey decrees concerning which she had not been consulted, and declaring her intention to abide by the engagements she had made at Tilsit.

The Emperor had no means of constraint as yet which he could use against Russia, but he was in no humour to tolerate the opposition of Sweden. He would no doubt have adopted instant coercive measures, had an event not occurred of so singular and unexpected a nature as to distract his thoughts for the moment from the channel which had of late so completely absorbed them. In the course of that very month of August, in which the grievances of

the blockade system had been so deplorably increased, the Swedes had chosen General Bernadotte as successor to the throne of Sweden. This extraordinary event had taken place with the suddenness of a theatrical effect, and had wellnigh baffled even Napoleon's foresight. However, he did not lack a pretext for interfering. Charles XIII., who had been placed on the throne by the will of the nation after the expulsion of Gustavus IV., had, it is true, no direct successor; but he had adopted the duke of Augustenburg, brother-in-law and heir-apparent to the king of Denmark, and destined in consequence of such adoption one day to restore Scandinavian unity, by uniting on his own head the three crowns of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Unfortunately however for this project, the duke of Augustenburg was seized with apoplexy while passing some troops in review, and died in May 1810. His death, although from natural causes, was attributed by the people to the partisans of the dethroned monarch; Count Fersen was cut to pieces in a revolt, and the ancient royal family was more strictly outlawed than ever.

The throne of Sweden was thus again without a successor. Charles XIII. would have liked to choose the brother of the duke of Augustenburg as his heir, but found himself so completely dependent on France that he dared not come to any such decision without the consent of the Emperor. He wrote to him, submitting his choice and asking for his support and counsel.[1] Napoleon preferred another candidate, but would not declare himself openly. He consented to the king's wishes, and gave him his full approbation, at the same time urging the king of Denmark, in an underhand way, to come forward himself as a candidate for the throne of Sweden. That prince did, in fact, take the step of addressing a letter to King Charles openly soliciting the honour of being chosen. Whether rightly or wrongly, he was most unpopular in Sweden, and the simple news of his candidature produced universal excitement and displeasure throughout that country. Moreover Désaugiers, our *chargé d'affaires*, testifies that the antipathy was rather

[1] Charles XIII. to Napoleon, June 2, 1810.

increased than otherwise when it was found by a semi-official article in the *Journal de l'Empire* that Napoleon was favourable to him.[1] Désaugiers however asserts that 'a word from the Emperor would be sufficient to decide everything.' He therefore in all his despatches begged for permission to use that word; but he was left without instructions, so unusual was the disguise to which the Emperor thought it necessary to recur, to enable him to exert an influence which he had so often hitherto abused.

The king meantime was highly embarrassed by having to choose between a claimant who was odious to the nation and a candidate unpalatable to the Emperor. In this critical juncture that happened, which had often been seen to happen formerly in Italy,—the choice of the nation fell on a stranger. Swedes of distinction had known Bernadotte when our armies were occupying Pomerania. He had made himself popular in Sweden by his consideration for the inhabitants, and had charmed every one who approached him by the amenity of his manners, the vivacity of his mind, and the extent of his knowledge. Baron Mörner, an obscure member of the Diet, was the first who seems to have thought of making Bernadotte a king, and he made him one. He went to Paris, presented himself to him in the name of a party that did not exist, and offered him a crown of which he had no right to dispose. Napoleon knew this and yet continued inactive. Mörner was back in Stockholm, zealously labouring for his candidate, before Lagerbielke, the Swedish minister in Paris, was informed of the intrigue. Champagny, consulted by Lagerbielke as to the Emperor's intentions, pretended, like Napoleon, not to look upon the matter as serious, and to leave the Swedes full liberty of choice—an act of indecision which Bernadotte's partisans were not slow in turning to account.[1]

In the month of August 1810 the States of Sweden met. Their committee persisted in declaring for the duke of Augustenburg, who on his side was equally pertinacious in his refusal, when suddenly a secret agent, a former

[1] Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Sweden, 294. Despatches of Désaugiers, July and August 1810.

French vice-consul at Gothenborg, arrived from France. A rumour soon spread that not only had Bernadotte accepted, but that he had obtained the consent of the Emperor. All the difficulties with France, therefore, would be smoothed away, and it was felt that he would bring with him not only the political influence of a prince allied to the Imperial family, but the fame of his own military reputation, prosperity, and an intimate alliance between the two countries. The people even went so far as to say that he 'would clear off the public debt with his private fortune.' The name of Bernadotte was thus at once accepted with unbounded acclamation. The king recommended him to the Senate in the most flattering terms; and the States bestowed on him, by a large majority, the title of Prince Royal of Sweden (August 17, 1810).

The Emperor no sooner learned the departure of the secret agent entrusted with Bernadotte's interests, than he, on the instant, sent off a despatch disowning him. He caused Désaugiers to be informed 'that he could not believe this individual would have the impudence to say he was entrusted with any mission whatever.' But the disavowal arrived too late. Napoleon, caught in the snare which he had himself laid, was compelled to submit to an incontrovertible fact, and to sanction the good fortune of a man towards whom, for a long time past, he had borne nothing but hatred. However, he found it impossible to conceal his ill-humour from the king of Sweden, rather curtly replying to him when he notified to him the choice made by his States, '*I was little prepared for this news.*'[1] Such was the part, rather involuntary as may be seen, which he took in Bernadotte's elevation, but which in no wise prevented his including him amongst those of whose ingratitude he had most cause to complain. Bernadotte's ingratitude became one of his favourite themes, like the ingratitude of the Emperor of Austria, from whom he had taken the half of his states. A general in the year 1793,

[1] This unpublished letter of Napoleon's to the king of Sweden is dated September 6, 1810, and is in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden, 294.

and minister of war under the Directory, Bernadotte had himself won all his grades; and, by the services he had rendered under the Empire, despite the persevering malevolence of which he had been the object, and the snares that had been laid for him, he had amply repaid his debt towards the Emperor.

The Swedes, with the rest of Europe, soon learned that the Emperor had resigned himself to Bernadotte's election, but was by no means satisfied with it. The first moment of surprise over, he recommenced his irritating and threatening communications with the Swedish Government on the subject of the continental blockade. Giving way to one of his favourite outbreaks of passion towards the Swedish ambassador Lagerbielke, he overwhelmed him with abuse, reproached him with all the infractions of the system committed by Sweden, with the tolerance shown by the Swedish Government in regard to the warehouses of colonial merchandise that were established at Gothenborg, and concluded his vehement harangue by saying, 'Choose either cannon-balls against the English, or war with France.'

Bernadotte himself answered the Emperor, wishing in person to plead the cause of his adopted country. He wrote him three successive letters showing him the sad condition to which Sweden was reduced in consequence of the annihilation of her commerce, and proved the insufficiency of her means to sustain war, from the dearth of her financial resources. If it were intended to compel her to accept burdens which she was incapable of supporting, it was essential, he urged, to furnish her with the resources she lacked, and which France, more highly favoured, possessed in abundance: 'we offer you arms and iron,' said Bernadotte at the end of his last letter; 'give us in return those means which nature has refused to us.'[1] No demand could have been more just or more natural considering the situation in which Sweden found herself placed. History records a thousand instances of the kind; but Napoleon

[1] Bernadotte to Napoleon, December 8, 1810—*Receuil des lettres, discours et proclamations* de Charles Jean, roi de Suède; Stockholm, 1858.

treated the overture with cool disdain. He made his minister Alquier answer Bernadotte 'that he never maintained a correspondence with any royal prince, not even with his own brothers,'[1] an assertion, the utter falsehood of which Bernadotte, as brother-in-law to Joseph, knew better than any one. To assist the needs of Sweden he offered to take a regiment of Swedes and a few hundred sailors into his pay; a derisive offer which Charles XIII. did not accept; but in order to evade the blows with which Napoleon threatened him, he consented to declare war against England, rather than to be obliged to declare it against the Emperor. A truly precious alliance for France, and in its solidity worthy of the policy which had prepared it!

With Russia this imperious tone could not be taken, but the calm resistance of the Emperor Alexander having convinced Napoleon of the impossibility of making him bend to his ever-changing will, he was habituating himself little by little to the idea of constraining him by using force, and was preparing with the utmost secrecy to pass from words to acts. Alexander had loyally accepted the consequences of his declaration of war against England, and had fulfilled his engagement of closing his ports to her; but he did not consider himself under any engagement to declare war against neutrals, nor to submit to the caprices of his ally. Although it might be difficult to distinguish between false neutrals and true ones, it did not necessarily ensue that the latter did not exist, as Napoleon pretended, and that there was neither an American navy, nor a Turkish navy, nor trading vessels belonging to other nations. Moreover, he was perfectly aware of all the subterfuges by which Napoleon had himself broken the blockade, and he justly asserted an equal right to regulate his own commerce and to modify his tariffs. Nor did he ignore the negotiations opened with England without his knowledge, through Labouchere, and which Napoleon had taken pains to deny,[2] although he avowed them somewhat later in a public document.

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, December 22, 1810.
[2] Under date of May 16, 1810.

Napoleon soon perceived, from Russia's firm attitude, that he must go to war with Alexander if he wished to make him yield. From the 4th of August 1810, before he even communicated to him the decree of the 5th of August, he may be seen making his first military preparations against Russia. He points out to the king of Saxony the works to be undertaken in order to make Torgau the depôt for the arms of his kingdom, and the fortifications to be constructed at Modlin with a view to have a bridge over the Vistula, while to Clarke he notes the reinforcements to be sent to Dantzic, to Glogau, to Küstrin, and to Stettin.[1] His requests to Alexander, however, are none the less pressing. He has been informed that six hundred ships, English or neutral, are wandering about the Baltic, in a state of panic, and he adjures him to have them seized, that England may thereby be forced to make peace; for he knows that she is in the last stage of distress.[2] But Alexander remained faithful to his system, by seizing the English vessels and respecting the neutrals. A month later brought fresh entreaties: 'There were no real neutrals; they were all English disguised under various flags and bearing false papers. They must be confiscated and England will be ruined.' At the same time, while thus soliciting, he is preparing to pass from prayers to threats. His preparations are more active than ever. He fortifies places on the Vistula, draws up for Clarke the framework of an army of 300,000 men for Germany, and of 200,000 for Italy,[3] secretly expedites 60,000 muskets and guns to the king of Saxony, and sends considerable reinforcements to Davout on the Elbe and Rapp on the Vistula.

Napoleon had been some months organising his preparations for war, when he suddenly learned, towards the beginning of December, that the Russians were, on their side, constructing defensive works; not 500 leagues from their frontier, as he was doing, but at about 100 behind it —namely, on the Dwina and the Dniester. He instantly

[1] Napoleon to the king of Saxony and to Clarke, August 4, 1810.
[2] Napoleon to Alexander, October 23, 1810.
[3] Napoleon to Clarke, October 6, 1810.

became indignant, and had a despatch written to Caulaincourt, saying that 'it is impossible not to see that these works show bad feeling on the part of the Russians. Do they wish to make peace with England and to violate the treaty of Tilsit? It would be the immediate cause of war.'[1] But these menaces missed their mark. Alexander listened to Caulaincourt's representations with the utmost amiability, and then with minute accuracy enumerated, to the astonishment of our ambassador, the works which Napoleon was himself having executed at Modlin, at Praga, at Sierok, at Thorn, and at Dantzic, besides the consignment of arms and the troops he had sent to the king of Saxony and into the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw; he pointed out the eminently offensive character of such military precautions, the purely defensive attitude, on the other hand, of Russia, which was limited to the fortification of a few towns at a distance from the frontier, such as Dunaburg, Riga, Revel, and Smolensk, and to the recall of some troops from Finland and Lithuania; he recounted his legitimate subjects of complaint against France—the Galician cessions, the rejection of the Polish convention, the offensive duplicity with which he had been treated in the affair of the marriage, our new encroachments in Italy and Holland, the bad faith displayed with regard to the continental system by means of the licences, while it was sought to impose its harshest terms upon him. Having finished this statement, he contented himself with appealing to Caulaincourt in a friendly manner to be his judge in the matter; Caulaincourt, a just and upright man, knew far less of our position than did Alexander, and could not help admitting the legitimacy of his grievances, at one moment by his silence, at another by his confused explanations.

However disquieting the subjects of complaint might have been which Napoleon seemed bent on incessantly reviving, instead of trying to make them be forgotten, they were as if effaced in one single day by the new attack on the rights of nations, which struck Europe dumb with astonishment, at the very moment that Alexander was addressing his well-grounded remonstrances to Caulaincourt.

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, December 5, 1810.

On the 10th of December 1810, in the midst of peace over the entire Continent with the exception of Spain, and without the shadow of a pretext or provocation to allege for its justification, a message addressed to the Senate by the Emperor informed the European governments that Napoleon had annexed to the Empire the Valais, a part of Hanover, the Hanseatic towns, Lauenburg, the Duchy of Oldenburg, and the whole coast from the Ems to the Elbe. This act, extraordinary even in the author of so many usurpations, was grounded on considerations even more extraordinary. 'The English,' said Napoleon, 'have torn asunder the public rights of Europe; a new order of things governs the universe. Fresh guarantees *having become necessary to me*, the annexation of the mouths of the Scheldt, of the Meuse, of the Rhine, of the Ems, of the Weser, and of the Elbe to the Empire appears to me to *be the first and the most important*. . . . The annexation of the Valais is the anticipated result of the immense works that I have been making for the past ten years in that part of the Alps.'

And this was all. To justify such violence he did not condescend to allege any pretext—to urge forward opportunities that were too long in developing, or to make trickery subserve the use of force—he consulted nothing but his policy; in other words, his good pleasure. To take possession of a country, it was sufficient that the country suited him: he said so openly, as the simplest thing in the world, and thought proper to add that these new usurpations were but a beginning, the *first*, according to his own expression, of those which seemed to him still necessary. And it was Europe, discontented, humbled, driven wild by the barbarous follies of the continental system, that he thus defied, as though he wished at any cost to convince every one that no amicable arrangement or conciliation was possible; and that there was but one course for governments or men of spirit to adopt, that of fighting unto death. Marmont in his Memoirs relates, that being in Paris about this period, he went to see his friend and compatriot Decrès, the Minister of Marine, an eminently sensible and intellectual man, and

who greatly astonished him. Marmont shared the intoxication then so general, especially amongst the military, and firmly believed in the perpetuity of the Imperial phantasmagoria. In good faith, he believed that that fanciful creation stood on immovable foundations, that we had inherited Roman grandeur, and that a nation so brilliant and so restless, so incapable of governing herself, was destined to govern the world. And the whole of France, like him, so seriously believed this vision, that she continued dazzled and infatuated by it for many long years after the dream had vanished. 'Well, Marmont,' said Decrès, 'so here you are; very happy at having been made marshal. You look upon everything in a bright light. Would you like me to tell you the truth and to unfold the future to you? *The Emperor is mad, quite mad;* he will upset us all, as certain as we stand here; and all this will end in some fearful catastrophe!'

CHAPTER X

STATE OF SPAIN AT THE END OF THE YEAR 1809— CAMPAIGN OF ANDALUSIA

(*November* 1809–*July* 1810)

It might have been supposed, from the imprudent manner in which Napoleon annoyed the European governments one after the other towards the end of 1810, that the affairs of Spain—which ought to have been his principal, if not his sole, care—had taken a new and unhoped-for turn; that his armies there had obtained some brilliant victory; that, in a word, he was on the eve of being at length disembarrassed from that exhaustive war, which alone had already cost him more soldiers than all his previous campaigns together. But it was nothing of the kind. In spite of the 400,000 men whom he then maintained in the Peninsula, his domination there had never been less stable, or his name more detested; his generals, in that quarter, never more discouraged, his partisans more downhearted, his enemies more confident.

When, in the month of October 1810, Napoleon had signed the peace with Austria, and the great masses of the army in Germany were once more at his disposal, every one expected to see them turn back towards Spain, headed by him who had just led them to victory at Wagram. No one in Europe was any longer capable of attempting a diversion in favour of that unfortunate country; all were interested in her fate, it is true, and gave her their best wishes, but they looked upon her fall as inevitable, and resigned themselves to it beforehand. England alone persisted in supporting Spain with 30,000 men, whom she kept in Portugal

under the orders of Wellington. But, notwithstanding the miracles which that little army had effected at Oporto and at Talavera, how could it be supposed possible for it to hold out against the crushing reinforcements which were about to submerge the Peninsula, if the Emperor decided on bringing the soldiers of Wagram thither? The English, like the Spaniards, looked forward to this contingency with dismay; King Joseph longed for it with his whole heart, seeing in it the consolidation of his tottering throne; the army looked forward to it as the termination of their humiliations and of long months of suffering; France, as the preliminary of a more certain peace than that which had just been signed at Vienna.

Napoleon was so deeply impressed with the importance of such a resolve, that he announced his approaching departure for Spain to the Senate, prophesying 'the flight of the terrified leopard' with more emphasis than was exactly becoming. After such a promise, doubt no longer seemed allowable, and as early as the month of November 1809 the rumour of his immediate arrival was so accredited in Spain, that King Joseph sent some of his officers to meet and welcome him.[1] What those on the one side feared, and on the other hoped, from his presence in Spain, was not merely the undeniable superiority of his genius, but the certainty that nothing would be wanting either in resources or troops for the attainment of a great end; that the jealousies and rivalries which had paralysed the command would be extinguished; that he would operate such great concentrations of troops as there was no force at that moment in Spain to resist, and which should sweep all before them like a hurricane. It was so clearly the Emperor's interest to show himself in the Peninsula, were it but for an instant, that he was every moment expected to appear there. As time passed by, doubts, it is true, began to rise; but for many long months the very uncertainty was sufficient to intimidate and seriously to trouble his enemies.

Whatever may have been his secret intentions in this respect, there were two facts the evidence of which he could

[1] Memoirs of Miot de Melito.

not mistake without imperilling his fortune and his fame. The first was the necessity of finishing at any cost so dangerous a war; one which, during the campaign of Austria, had kept his best troops occupied, and might tie his hands at a moment when he should most need his troops. The second was the impossibility of ending it without devoting to it all his best military resources. For wellnigh two years his finest armies had been engulphed in the Peninsula without having been able to establish his authority over it; he had employed there his best generals, his most experienced veterans, an immense *matériel*, and had succeeded in covering the country with blood and ruin; but the work was no farther advanced than on the first day. Although victors in the majority of engagements, our *corps d'armée*, our divisions, our detachments, were everywhere either held at bay, or blockaded, or neutralised in the positions they occupied, and if Spain was to be subdued, it could only be by some effort far superior to all that had hitherto been attempted.

After the battle of Talavera our armies, far from seeking to turn their numerical superiority to profit by pursuing an enemy who, though victorious, was flying, had remained stationary for some time, as though half-stunned by the shock they had received. Wellington had been able to retire, without being harassed, from Truxillo upon Badajoz; after which he pitched his camp between Badajoz and Alcantara, covering the southern frontier of Portugal. He was not himself in a position to undertake anything since the great concentration of troops had been effected around Madrid; all the less since he had been forced to give up the co-operation of the Spanish army, in consequence of disappointments of every kind experienced during the campaign of Talavera. We, on the other hand, when driven out of Portugal, had been obliged to evacuate Galicia, and barely occupied half of Estremadura and of Old Castile; so that over the entire west of the Peninsula we had no control. To the south we had crossed the defiles of the Sierra Morena, and the line of the Guadiana, only to suffer the disaster of Baylen, and had not shown ourselves beyond

La Mancha since Dupont's defeat. That single blow had lost us the whole of Andalusia, with its magnificent provinces of Seville, Granada, Jaën, and Cordova. In the east we were less unfortunate; for, with success, not however unmingled with reverses, we maintained our possession of Catalonia and Aragon. However, we did not then occupy either the province of Valencia, of Cuença, or of Murcia. In fact, we only held the north of the Peninsula, and even that was disputed by numberless guerillas, who unceasingly harassed our communications. The centre, it is true, was inundated by our troops, but, after all, we were rather encamped there than firmly established.

These unsubdued provinces were protected by natural obstacles of great strength, resulting from the very configuration of the country. At every step we found rocks, torrents, defiles, and precipices, which afforded powerful means of defence to a fanatical population, and to armies that were unsteady in the plain or in a pitched battle, but formidable in minor actions, and wellnigh invincible when fighting in intrenched positions. These provinces, moreover, were defended by fortresses that were so many centres of insurrection, and which we had been too negligent in not capturing. Such were Badajoz and Olivença in Estremadura; Almeida, Elvas, and Abrantes, in Portugal; Ciudad Rodrigo in Old Castile; Cadiz and Gibraltar in Andalusia; Mequinenza and Lerida in Aragon; Tortosa, Tarragona, Hostalrich, and Gerona in Catalonia, and many other less important places, which however could only be taken by a regular siege. For the last six months Gouvion Saint-Cyr had been ineffectually besieging Gerona, the crumbling rocks of which Don Alvares de Castro, a true hero, defended at the head of a few thousand starving men; and Gerona, like Saragossa, proved of what prodigious endurance and courage the Spaniards were capable when it was a question of defending their towns.

Around this vast semicircle occupied by us in the centre of Spain, and which kept continually contracting towards the north, were grouped our different *corps d'armée*, facing an almost equal number of Spanish corps, ever ready to

re-form despite their repeated defeats. In Estremadura Mortier and Soult were observing Wellington; in La Mancha Victor and Sebastian watched the passes of Sierra Morena. They knew that in Andalusia the army of Gregorio della Cuesta had been largely reinforced, and was now under the command of General Areizaga, a fiery and presumptuous officer. They consequently expected to see it soon appear beyond the defiles from which the heads of its columns often emerged. In Catalonia and in Aragon, Saint-Cyr and Suchet had to fight Blake and Reding. Suchet, beaten by Blake at Alcaniz, avenged himself at Maria and at Belchite, while he prepared also to besiege the strong places on the Ebro, and unrelentingly pursued the bands of Mina. This was the prelude to his subsequent success, a success due to skilful administration, distinguished military talents, and the good fortune of never having the English as adversaries. In the Asturias, General Bonnet had to fight against Mahy and Baltesteros; while in Old Castile, General Marchand, who had replaced Ney, during his recall to France, had lately suffered a most serious check from Del Parque, at the head of Romana's corps.

In the provinces of the north, on our direct line of communication, Navarre, Alava, and Biscay, the continual passage of our armies prevented the insurrection from employing regular troops against us. This defect, however, they supplied by hundreds of guerillas, who captured our convoys, stopped our couriers, pillaged our depôts, harassed our detachments, killed our wounded and our stragglers, disabled one-third of our effective soldiers before they reached their destination—in a word, did more harm than all the other Spanish armies united. The guerillas—an original and spontaneous production of this war and of Spain, not to be imitated with impunity in circumstances differing from those which gave them birth—had within a few months acquired an immense development. Certain it is that, notwithstanding the great services they rendered, the guerillas have been fatal to Spain, from the habits of brigandage, want of discipline, and anarchy, which they engendered. Had Spain been opposed to France under

the conditions of ordinary warfare, it would have undeniably been better for her never to have had recourse to so dangerous a weapon. But in presence of an enemy who aimed at occupying, not one portion of her provinces, but her entire territory, all regular war—nay, the shortest truce —became impossible. Spain could not choose either hour or means, nor enjoy the benefit of long preparation, or of the precious advantages arising from disciplined resistance. Before thinking of the preservation of order or of certain social principles, it was essential for her to live and to remain a nation. Without the guerillas she probably could not have achieved this object, for the war in Spain would not have lasted six months, and all the fruits of her long resistance would have been lost to Europe.

The general inaction of our armies was not alone caused by the considerable losses they had sustained, the extraordinary fatigue of the campaigns in Portugal and Estremadura, or the extreme want in which they were living; it arose quite as much from the deep discouragement which had seized its chiefs, the distrust and rancour which divided them, the want of unity of command, and the absence of a recognised and paramount authority. Jourdan had been recalled to France after Talavera, and Soult had replaced him as chief of the staff to Joseph. But the king had not pardoned Soult for his dilatoriness in operating his movement on Plasencia, or for his inertness during the retreat of the English, or for his disinclination to follow any but his own inspirations. Joseph, moreover, was stung to the quick by the merciless rigour with which Napoleon had noted his strategic faults, and discovered his petty dissimulation at the end of the last campaign. The blame and criticisms which his operations had drawn down upon his head were not of a nature to encourage him to resume the offensive. He considered himself misunderstood, nay, almost sacrificed. He felt insulted by the intractable behaviour of the generals, shocked at their exactions which he had no power to repress, and profoundly humiliated by the state of financial distress in which he was left. His treasury had no resources but the proceeds of the tolls at

the gates of Madrid, some paltry taxes collected in the neighbouring provinces, and lastly, a small portion of the sale of the confiscations of which Napoleon had reserved to himself the lion's share. It was by means of such miserable subsidies that he had to feed the army, to pay his guard, his court, and his high functionaries, without mentioning those favourites by whom, from taste as well as from tradition, Joseph was surrounded.

Such resources were eminently insufficient. Napoleon's system was to pay his troops, but not to trouble himself about feeding them. Hence it ensued that our armies were compelled to live by ransacking and pillaging the country; they had no choice; and while this demoralised the soldiers, it ruined and exasperated the inhabitants. Joseph, with judgment and clearness of sight, perceived that, having regard to the character of the Spaniard, his hatred to foreigners, and his indomitable energy, the subjugation of the country would never be achieved by a system such as this; that, in fact, nothing short of the complete extermination of every man then capable of bearing arms would produce that result. Every robbery, every exaction, gave one man more to the insurrection, and our proceedings could have but one effect—that of perpetuating the resistance for ever.

Himself of a kindly nature, and an optimist, Joseph held such barbarous deeds in sincere horror, and measured their effect correctly; but he made quite as great a mistake as his brother in imagining with credulous vanity that, were he left to himself, he could win over the Spaniards by the sole *prestige* of his generosity, his gentleness, his courtesy, and his liberal and conciliatory spirit. In this he deceived himself quite as much as Napoleon did; but the Utopia of the one was the mistake of a high-minded nature, while that of the other was the error of a lawless spirit which never shrank from the atrocity of the means to be employed, when once he considered them likely to lead to his end. This also can be seen by observation of their opinions when they criticised one another. The whole truth can only be known by listening to both, and each

excels in discovering the weak points of his opponent's system. But neither the one nor the other would comprehend that there was only one method of settling Spanish affairs, and that was by leaving the Spaniards free to govern themselves as they might please.

In the same degree that the French were discouraged, uncertain, and little hopeful of the future, the Spaniards showed themselves ardent, enthusiastic, and bold. Not that their troubles were less than those of the invaders. On the contrary, they had to struggle against difficulties a thousandfold graver, for they no longer possessed either legal government, institutions, or organised armies. They beheld their country a prey to fearful devastation of which they could foresee no end, and they confronted their enemies for little else than to be cut to pieces. But patriotism transformed everything in their eyes; it took the place of all that they had lost, it inspired them with unquenchable hope; and their faith in the final success of their cause was only equalled by their confidence in its justice. Even their political and military faults proceeded, for the most part, from over-confidence.

After having wearied Wellington of their co-operation by boasting, as well as by facility in making promises and not keeping them, they now despised his warnings as the offspring of timidity, and spoke of acting with their own forces alone, marching on Madrid, and driving the French out of the Peninsula. Their greatest want was absence of direction, but though all were suffering from the evil, but few were aware of it. The insurrectionary juntas, which had formed themselves at the outset of the war, had exerted an influence upon the strength and duration of the resistance which no centralised power could have supplied. But it was impossible to demand from them harmonious operations or decisions of general interest. The need of a higher authority had been felt, and the central junta, formed by delegations from the local ones, sprang from this necessity. It was now found that the central junta itself was insufficient.

Deriving its power from the insurrection, which had

little respect for its own work, and lacking any legal title or clearly defined attributes, the central junta fixed at Seville found itself exposed to the jealousy of the local junta of that city, as well as to open resistance on the part of the juntas of Valencia, Estremadura, and several other provinces. Like every assembly which arrogates to itself the executive as well as the legislative power, it had committed many faults. It displayed neither wisdom, nor foresight, nor practical spirit in the military administration, and had shown a greater tendency to declaim than to act. When it did act, its acts were criticised, its decisions discussed, its powers disputed; and before long, conspiracies were hatched against it. Such is the natural and well-merited fate of every government which refuses to ask the nation for a legal sanction to a power that has come to it by the chance of a revolution. The fault thus committed in not imposing on their delegates the obligation of convoking the Cortes was expiated by the Spaniards only by a hazardous anarchy.

This great measure, all the more necessary that the danger had become more menacing, was demanded on every side with increasing energy. But, as always happens on similar occasions, the central junta found every sort of good reason for not resigning its dictatorship. With the sole view of perpetuating its own existence, it alleged various pretexts which did honour neither to its good faith nor its patriotism; as for instance the fear that such an appeal to the nation would check its military ardour, or that it would cause power to fall into the hands of partisans of the old *régime*, or on the other hand that it might give the control of public affairs to fanatical reformers who would ruin everything by inopportune innovations. It saw no safety or salvation for the country but in its own preservation—outside of that all was danger. Soon, however, frightened at its isolation and unpopularity, and at the conspiracies that were closing around it, the central junta beheld itself forced to yield to public opinion, and to give up a portion of its attributes to an executive commission, of which one of its chief adversaries, the Marquis della

Romana, became a member. Then, having to admit most reluctantly that its services might some day be dispensed with, it decided on convoking the Cortes in the month of March 1810. This concession, at once tardy and insufficient, did not induce the public to pardon it for so long an usurpation, and its only reward was universal contempt.

Such was the general situation of Spain when Napoleon concluded peace with Austria, and was called upon by the nature of events, as well as by his oft-repeated engagements, to put an end in person to so fatal a war. He was the more bound to do so, in that he was the sole author and the sole partisan of this criminal enterprise, which had been conceived, prepared, maintained, and continued by him in opposition to public feeling, and without the pretext of any national interest. He owed it to the sufferings of his soldiers who were sacrificed for a most unworthy cause, to his own dignity, to the security of his other conquests—nay, even to the fame of his power and of his genius. If he did not feel the force of these motives, he at least pretended to understand them. He no sooner quitted Vienna than he despatched important reinforcements to the Pyrenees, under General Loison, and announced that others, more numerous, would follow under Junot, in all forming a total of 80,000 infantry and 16,000 cavalry. He sent Berthier to Bayonne, as Major-General, specially to superintend their organisation, and then spread the rumour of his approaching departure for Spain, with the view of intimidating his enemies there by the expectation of so formidable a contingency.

The Spaniards became impatient to act, in order to anticipate this danger. They prepared a grand offensive operation against King Joseph, once more forgetting that, reduced to their own resources, they were incapable of confronting in pitched battle the large masses of French troops assembled on the great plains of Madrid. Many circumstances contributed to make them commit this fault; such as the enthusiasm produced by the success of the Duke del Parque at Tamanes, and the hope entertained by the central junta of regaining its popularity by victory,

grounded on the strength and comparative good order of their army of Andalusia, which was the most numerous and the best equipped that had been seen in Spain for a long time past. Wellington, who was then at Seville—on a visit to his brother the Marquis of Wellesley—vainly endeavoured to divert the chiefs of the Government from this project. Not only however was his advice not listened to, but with a view to inspire their general, Areizaga, with more confidence, he was officially informed by the central junta that Wellington was to assist him in the campaign.

Nothing, however, was further from the intention of the English general. He had experienced to his cost the audacity, obstinacy, and military ignorance of the Spanish commanders, besides the weakness and lack of discipline of the Spanish armies. In his annoyance, he would recognise no virtue in them except the facility of re-forming after a defeat; he was firmly resolved to accept no common action with them unless on the condition of his dictating orders to them, and having his commissariat well secured. Nor would he admit—although both then and since the opinion has been widely held—that enthusiasm was sufficient to make good soldiers: 'People are very apt to believe,' he wrote on this subject to Lord Castlereagh, 'that enthusiasm carried the French through their revolution, and was the parent of those exertions which have nearly conquered the world; but if the subject is nicely examined, it will be found that enthusiasm was the name only, but that force was the instrument which brought forward those great resources under the system of terror which first stopped the allies; and that a perseverance in the same system of applying every individual and every description of property to the service of the army by force has since conquered Europe.'[1]

The Spanish armies not yet possessing anything but enthusiasm, it was necessary for them, in his opinion, to acquire military qualifications before undertaking any great operations: 'Large masses, in strong positions, which will give them an opportunity of acquiring a system of discipline,

[1] To Viscount Castlereagh, August 24, 1809. Despatches.

at the same time that the French can do them no harm and will be exposed themselves to the attacks of the Spanish detachments, and of the guerillas, which, under the protection of these masses, and while the enemy's attention would be taken up by them, might operate on their flanks and rear—this is the system which I have always recommended, for which the country and people are particularly well calculated.'[1]

These counsels, dictated by good sense, which, alike in war and politics, is true genius when combined with rapidity of conception, were disdainfully rejected. The central junta were already discussing what ought to be done when they should have taken possession of Madrid.[2] Areizaga, a young officer, full of courage, but presumptuous and thoroughly incapable, who had been raised to the command as much for his defects as for his good qualities, crossed the defiles of the Sierra Morena with 50,000 men, in the first days of November 1809. From thence he rushed down into the plains of La Mancha with unparalleled impetuosity. So certain did he feel of victory, that he carried in his suite a troop of actors who were rehearsing a piece intended to celebrate his entry into Madrid.[3] After a slight cavalry combat with our advanced posts at Dos Barrios, he crossed Ocaña, and reached the Tagus near Aranjuez. Then, becoming as hesitating as he had been resolute, and as if astonished at his own audacity, he lost time in useless vacillation, sent one of his divisions across the river, then recalled it, and finally fell back upon Ocaña, where his evil genius seemed to call him.

Soult, after some uncertainty as to the enemy's intentions, had recalled Mortier and the fifth corps from Talavera to Toledo, had made Sebastiani cross the Tagus near Aranjuez, and moreover brought forward the Desolle division and Joseph's Guard to that point. These combined forces formed a total of about 35,000 excellent troops. Their flanks were thoroughly protected; the right by the second corps at Oropesa, against any offensive movement on the

[1] To Col. Roche, October 28, 1809. Despatches.
[2] Torena. [3] Miot.

part of the English, and the left by Victor, who had re-ascended the valley of the Tagus as far as Fuente Duena. On the evening of the 15th of November the two armies were completing their concentration in the environs of Ocaña, when three brigades of our cavalry suddenly found themselves in the presence of the whole Spanish cavalry. Instead of retiring before a mass of such imposing appearance, they charged it with impetuosity, and scattered it in disorder.

Next day, the 19th, our troops, without waiting for Victor, boldly attacked the Spanish army. The latter had taken up a position at Ocaña, its centre outside the town, its right upon a small hill near Noblejas, its left behind a ravine which was so deep as to shelter it from attack, but, on the other hand, hindered it likewise from making any attack. The forced inactivity to which this portion of Areizaga's army was condemned allowed Soult to throw nearly all his strength against the Spanish right. He charged it with Sebastiani's cavalry and two divisons of infantry, while Sénarmont thundered against the centre with thirty pieces of artillery. The Spaniards sustained this first attack stoutly, although their cavalry, intimidated by the combat on the eve, was of no avail. The Leval division, decimated by the Spanish fire, had to retrograde, and the general fell severely wounded; but the Spaniards were not allowed time to turn this momentary advantage to account. Mortier, at once pushing forward the Girard division, supported by that of Desolle, which rushed into Ocaña, carrying it at the point of the bayonet, the Spanish line gave way, and its troops dispersed. Sebastiani instantly fell upon the broken ranks with all his cavalry, and making a corps of 6000 men lay down their arms, mercilessly charged the scattered remnants of an army that was then nothing but a multitude seized with panic, flying in all directions. The battle had lasted three hours, and the Spaniards had lost nearly 5000 men killed and wounded; and when night fell, we had captured 25,000 prisoners, having lost but 1700 killed or wounded.[1]

[1] Soult, in a letter on the subject of this battle (dated November

Almost simultaneously news arrived that Kellerman had, at Alba de Tormes, avenged the check of Tamanes, and a little later, that the defenders of Gerona, after horrible suffering, heroically endured, had succumbed, owing to Saint-Cyr's skilful arrangements (December 1, 1809). Saint-Cyr, who was in disgrace for having too boldly criticised orders that were sent to him from Paris, had returned to France on the eve of the capitulation of the place, and all the honour of the success was attributed to Marshal Augereau, whose short passage through Catalonia had, however, only been marked by reverses.

These advantages, the importance of which was undeniable, for a time raised the prestige of our arms in the Peninsula. Considerable reinforcements entered Spain daily by the Pyrenees, and larger ones were still expected. At Madrid the destination reserved for them by the Emperor was known. First of all they were to march against the English, to drive them to the sea, and force them to re-embark after having destroyed all their establishments in Portugal. This was the plan he caused to be announced everywhere, and which, it was said, he was to carry out himself, before finishing the subjugation of the Peninsula. But it was almost impossible to calculate on the completion of his preparations, or, consequently, upon his arrival in Spain, before the middle or the end of the next spring. Between this and then could not something else be undertaken by that army which had just destroyed at Ocaña, and with such ease, the last regular troops possessed by Spain, and the only rampart of Andalusia? The Emperor unceasingly complained of our inaction. On the 11th of November 1809 he writes to Joseph: 'No more news of what is being done in Spain! And yet, with so large and good an army, and in the face of enemies who are so little to be feared, how is it possible that more progress is not made in our affairs?'

22, 1809), calculates our loss at not more than 150 killed and 150 wounded. But this must be regarded as nothing but one of those bulletin falsehoods, which had become traditional in our army. Mortier's report is much truer, and he calculates our loss at 1200 men.

Joseph was sensitive to these reproaches. The victory at Ocaña, for which he assumed to himself all the credit, had shed fresh lustre on his military talents, rather undervalued after the battle of Talavera. His troops had recovered their ardour, but were dying of hunger, like the Court itself, amidst provinces fearfully exhausted by this interminable war. And yet two steps off there was abundance for every one, in the rich plains of Andalusia, covered with industrious and opulent towns, the resources of which were still untouched. Why not seize Andalusia while waiting until they could undertake the campaign in Portugal? What was there to fear, now that the army of Andalusia was destroyed? He knew from the very Spaniards themselves that the government of the central junta had tired out every one, and that many towns were disposed to submit in the hope of ending such a state of anarchy. Moreover, it was most improbable that there was any cause to dread a diversion by the English, as they had allowed Areizaga to succumb, and would likewise be held in check by a *corps d'armée* left on the Tagus. The conquest of Andalusia, therefore, would be a mere military promenade, while it would throw the other provinces into a state of the utmost discouragement. In short, the prospect pleased every one—Soult[1] especially, who was wearied by Portugal and his encounters with the English. Joseph consequently wrote to Napoleon, submitting the project to him, and sending him his aide-de-camp, Clermont Tonnerre, with orders to give the Emperor every explanation he might desire.

One consideration alone amongst this number was of a nature to influence Napoleon—the one, in fact, grounded on the important resources to be found in Andalusia. Keenly alive as a rule to this species of argument, he was, at that particular moment, meditating a reduction in the subsidies he granted his brother, frequently repeating that the expenses of the Spanish war were ruining his exchequer. But to a military genius like his, an advantage of this description could not for a single instant be weighed

[1] Soult to Clarke, December 14, 1809.

against the inconvenience and danger, from a strategic point of view, which an expedition to Andalusia presented.

The Emperor knew Spain well enough, after an experience of two years, to be aware that the great difficulty was not so much the invasion of the country, as how to keep it. They might advance into Andalusia as they had done before; of that no one could doubt who knew the strength of the expeditionary army. But then it would be necessary to occupy and to defend a vast territory situated at such a distance from our centre and from our lines of communication, and to devote numberless troops to this purpose, which, though sufficient for themselves, could never be of the slightest assistance to the other *corps d'armée* engaged on the more essential points of the Peninsula. Moreover, at the extremity of Andalusia stood Cadiz, a fortified town, the siege of which alone would require a whole army. Was it possible to subdue it in reasonable time? Was it wise to employ such a force at the extremity of Spain, when the English were threatening the country at its very heart?

It seemed impossible for such palpable objections to escape Napoleon's genius. Even his enemies could not allow that he would commit such a fault. 'His first object will be to attack Portugal,' wrote Wellington on the 14th of November 1809.[1] However, he answered Joseph's proposal simply by silence. One word from him would have sufficed to stop everything, but that one word he abstained from pronouncing up to the last. The riches of Andalusia made him forget the dangers of the expedition, and he allowed that to be done which he did not wish to order. He wrote to Clarke and to Berthier every day on the affairs of Spain, and gave them the most minute instructions about the reorganisation of the *corps d'armée*, but his letters do not contain one single observation on the expedition to Andalusia.

After fruitless efforts to obtain the desired authorisation, King Joseph took silence for consent, and the expedition was resolved upon. It had been begun for upwards of a

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, November 14, 1809.

month, when a letter from Napoleon was received, dated January 31, 1810, containing, it is true, very excellent advice as to the precautions which should be taken against a movement by the English. 'There is nothing dangerous in Spain but the English,'[1] said the Emperor, after having criticised the plan of campaign. But such retrospective disapprobation could no longer stop an enterprise that had been inspired by want of foresight, tolerated by cupidity, and which was to have the most disastrous results.

Joseph's army was composed of three corps commanded by Marshals Mortier and Victor, and General Sebastiani, with Soult as chief of the staff. It also comprised a reserve placed under the orders of Desolle. The second corps, now commanded by General Reynier, had been left in observation in the valley of the Tagus, in the neighbourhood of Talavera. The army arrived at the foot of the Sierra Morena towards the middle of January. The principal defile of these mountains, that which passes by Despeñas-Perros, La Carolina, and Baylen, afforded most admirable posts for defence, but which could be turned on two sides—on the right by Almaden and Gaudalcanal, on the left by San Esteban. Under these circumstances, something more than the disheartened remnants of Areizaga's forces was required to defend this barrier, albeit a strong one, against an army of 70,000 men led by experienced generals. Sebastiani therefore marched by San Esteban, and Victor by Almaden, while the principal corps, under Soult and Mortier, advanced upon La Carolina. In view of these arrangements, the Spaniards, convinced of the impossibility of arresting our advance, retired after some insignificant fighting, though not without having left many prisoners in our hands.

On the 22d of January the three *corps d'armée* had effected their junction on the Guadalquivir, from Cordova to Andujar. From thence Sebastiani turned off to the left upon Jaën, which immediately surrendered. He then took possession of Granada, after defeating Areizaga, who was pursued into the kingdom of Murcia, where he had to

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, January 31, 1810.

give over his command to Blake. Meanwhile Joseph made a triumphal entry into Cordova, and the 30th of January found him at Carmona, a few leagues only from Seville. Here an important question suggested itself to the chiefs of the army. Ought they to bend their steps to that capital, or would it be better to leave it on one side, and march straight to Cadiz, which was a far more important place, and which they might perhaps succeed in taking by surprise?

It was doubtless known that the defences of Seville could not stop us for any length of time, that a portion of the inhabitants were well disposed towards us, from hatred of the now thoroughly contemptible central junta, and that the fall of Seville would produce a profound impression of discouragement. But it was also known that unless Cadiz were in some sort carried by assault, notwithstanding the canal which separated it from the mainland, it would be most difficult to take it; and furthermore it was known [1] that a Spanish division, commanded by the Duke d'Albuquerque, was on the way to the assistance of Andalusia, that it had crossed the Sierra Morena, almost on the same line as Victor's *corps d'armée*, had already reached Carmona, and was hurrying on by forced marches to Cadiz. Despite the ground which Albuquerque had thus gained upon us, it might still be not impossible to overtake him on the road, perhaps even at the very gates of Cadiz, in which case an attempt could be made to enter the town pell-mell with him.

Whether this supposition were right or wrong, it was the only chance of surprising Cadiz, and it was our duty to attempt it. A council was held at Carmona, and the generals were divided, but Soult's opinion decided the balance in favour of the march on Seville.[2] According to

[1] This is evident from Soult's letters to Berthier of January 25 and 31, 1810.

[2] Soult, according to his custom, did not fail to throw the blame of this on others, but on this point we have many proofs which seem conclusive; first his own, though in a doubtful form it is true: 'It is probable that Seville will bring Cadiz with it,' he wrote to Berthier

his view, the moral effect produced by the capitulation of Seville would bring about that of Cadiz. 'Let them answer for Cadiz to me, and I will answer for Seville!' he exclaimed in reply to the entreaties of General O'Farrell, who tried to divert him from this project.

Up to the last moment the central junta had maintained the wildest delusions amongst the inhabitants of Seville. Even as late as the 20th of January, when our advance-guards were already on the Guadalquivir, they announced, by a proclamation placarded throughout Seville, that there was nothing to fear, and that Areizaga was about to stop us in the Sierra Morena, while Del Parque would fall upon our flanks. This assurance notwithstanding, the members of the junta did not fail to prepare for departure to Cadiz. When the French army appeared before Seville there was no choice but to surrender. Then for the first time the popular intellect, ever slow in such cases, discovered that declamation and action were two very different matters; that the members of the junta were not heroes because they were unceasingly talking of conquest and death, though they never left their houses; that their incapacity and presumption, their noisy and restless inertness, their absurd plans of campaign, had been the principal if not the sole cause, of all the deplorable disasters of the past twelve months; that although their obstinacy in postponing the elections might have arisen from an ill-founded conviction that they alone were capable of saving the country, it also might have been due to the perverse ambition of preserving, contrary to the wish of the nation, a dictatorship which had never been conferred upon them by any legal mandate, and of which they had not known how to make any but the most wretched use. Their systematic falsehoods, their pretended victories, their cynical acts of despotism committed under the name of liberty, were now recalled; and they

on January 27. Then there is Joseph's testimony, which is very affirmative, and is contained in a letter addressed to the Duchesse d'Abrantes, dated August 29, 1834; that of Miot, who followed the army, and who, in general, is very exact; and lastly, that of Marshal Jourdan, who speaks from the accounts given by generals.

were accused of having shamefully speculated upon the misfortunes of the country for their own private interests. Popular hatred, implacable in its justice, because it generally succeeds blind favour, sought them out in their very homes; some were arrested and subjected to the worst treatment, but by far the greater number had fled at the first sign of danger.

King Joseph made his entry into Seville on the 1st of February, after a feeble show of resistance, which was not long continued, as the inhabitants felt that it would only entail the destruction of the town, without effectually stopping our progress. Although the French were justly execrated in Spain, Joseph's character was known and appreciated. All were aware that the dream of his ambition was to make himself beloved by his subjects. He was consequently received at Seville almost as a liberator, so much had the government of the junta there rendered itself odious and contemptible. No conquest ever took place under happier auspices. 'One might consider the war as almost ended,' writes Soult to Berthier on the 3d of February. The expedition hitherto had been nothing but a triumphal march across magnificent plains and under the finest sky in the world. Our soldiers had abundance of everything, the inhabitants were full of civility towards us, the war contributions were duly paid, and King Joseph was radiant.

In this state of ecstasy he drew up the most ridiculous proclamations, one moment declaring in Napoleonic style 'that resistance was useless, since unchangeable destiny had decided the fate of Spain,' in another promising the Spaniards 'to erect a third pillar of Hercules' to the memory of those who had 'reconquered for France her natural allies.' He fondly fancied that he had invented a new method of making war, which consisted in seducing and charming his enemies by the grace and amenity of his proceedings, in place of brutally attacking them in the old style by showers of cannon-balls. Sebastiani had also entered Malaga almost without striking a blow. Joseph persuaded himself that owing to the *prestige* he had now acquired in Andalusia a

simple summons to surrender would be sufficient to induce each fortified place to submit. At the same time therefore that he sent Victor's *corps d'armée* forward to march upon Cadiz, he despatched Mortier to the Guadiana to summon Badajoz, wrote to Ney, who had then returned to Old Castile, to summon Ciudad Rodrigo, and desired Suchet to make a demonstration of the same description against Valencia.

The news of the resistance of Cadiz was the first blow which undeceived him in the midst of his beautiful dream. Despising the orders of the central junta, which tried to attract him to Seville, where he would have been caught without profit or advantage to any one, Albuquerque had clearly perceived that Cadiz was the one single strategic point of importance in Andalusia, and that at any cost he ought to save it. Thither therefore he marched, day and night, without allowing himself to be diverted from his object, effected the entrance of 10,000 men into the town and thereby rendered an incalculable service to the Spanish cause.

Surrounded on almost every side by the sea, joined by a narrow lagoon to the Isle of Leon, which is separated from the mainland by a deep and wide channel, protected by formidable defences, provisioned by an invincible fleet, and defended by a large garrison destined soon to be supported by a strong English contingent, the town of Cadiz was well-nigh impregnable, and might defy every effort of the army of Andalusia. The members of the central junta who had taken refuge there were at once replaced by a Regency composed of five members. This Regency obtained extensive powers, and was commissioned to govern while waiting for the approaching convocation of the Cortes. The defence was then vigorously organised, and when Victor appeared before the place, and had fruitlessly summoned it to surrender, he could do no more than invest it until he was in a position to undertake regular siege operations.

The resistance of Cadiz was the final term of Joseph's prosperity; from that date everything began to fall from bad to worse. He almost simultaneously learnt that Suchet's

summons to Valencia, Ney's to Ciudad Rodrigo, and Mortier's to Badajoz, had in no wise supplied their lack of siege artillery, or produced any more effect than that of Victor at Cadiz. These marshals had all to withdraw after a species of bravado unworthy of real generals, and their failures did not contribute to render them better disposed towards Joseph. Moreover, at that same moment, Napoleon had struck his brother a blow which he felt a thousandfold more keenly. Joseph was persuaded that he had converted the Emperor to his ideas upon Spain, and his favourite plan of conquering it by gentle means, when a decree was communicated to him, issued on the 8th of February 1810, by which all the provinces situated to the north of the Ebro were formed into military governments, independent of the royal authority, and subject to the control of the Emperor alone. The governors-general of those provinces—Suchet, Augereau, Reille, and Thouvenot—were invested with all the rights of sovereignty, including the levying of taxes and of contributions for the pay and maintenance of the army. The monthly subsidies granted to Joseph were at the same time reduced to 2,000,000 francs. Soon afterwards other decrees deprived him of all influence in the direction of the armies. Masséna was made commander-in-chief of the army in Portugal; Soult, that of the army of Andalusia; while Joseph was limited to the command of the Desolle division, under the derisive title of Army of the Centre, and thus found himself despoiled of all control over the military operations, as he had already been of all political authority.

In a military sense this innovation was intended to facilitate the work of the conquest by dividing its labour. Napoleon attributed the faults and misfortunes of the campaign of 1809 to the system of one sole direction personified in Marshal Jourdan, without being willing to admit that those faults and misfortunes were due far more to a lack of unity than to excess of centralisation; for Jourdan had been thwarted incessantly, at one moment by inopportune orders from the Emperor, at another by the resistance of the generals. To multiply commands and responsibilities was not

the way to diminish the evil; and direction even of an inferior kind, provided it were in the hands of one person, was of far higher value than the greatest talents, accompanied by divided action.

From a political point of view the decree of February 8 was the preliminary to a definitive annexation of the provinces of the Ebro to the Empire, an annexation destined, said the Emperor, to indemnify him for the expenses and sacrifices he had made for Spain! After having given Spain to his brother, he took it back from him piece by piece, to defray the expenses which that same donation had occasioned him; then, recognising that Joseph also had a right to some compensation, he offered him Portugal in exchange for the Ebro provinces! In this fashion, in this dismemberment, in this singular chaos, in this endless mess of words and things, were all the solemn declarations as to the independence and the integrity of Spain to end! Another motive, no doubt, for the promulgation of these projects, the bearing of which no one could mistake, was a desire to prepare the public mind of Europe for the annexation of Holland, the Valais, and the provinces of the Elbe and Weser. It would be difficult to believe in such madness, if it were not expressed at length in King Joseph's correspondence with the Emperor. On the 9th of September 1810, Napoleon wrote to Champagny instructing him in a few days to 'inform the Spanish Minister *that I wish to have the left bank of the Ebro as an indemnity for the money and for all that Spain has cost me up to this present moment.*' Thus, by a perversion of ideas which at first looks like a terrible bit of irony, the Spaniards in his eyes were transformed into his debtors, and were under obligations to him, for the advances he had made to them in the form of so many massacres!

Joseph returned to his capital towards the middle of May 1810, sore at heart, and uttering the most bitter complaints, speaking on every occasion of sending in his resignation, but never having the courage to act up to his words, although encouraged to do so by his most intimate

advisers.[1] He wrote letter after letter to the Emperor, and sent him his two ministers D'Azanza and Almenara, successively, in the hope of inducing him to reverse his decisions. He was now no more, he wrote, 'than the *concierge* of the Madrid hospitals.' He beheld himself abandoned by the majority of his attendants, whom he could no longer support. Personally he had no other ambition than that of withdrawing into private life, 'but he deplored the change which had been effected in his brother's feelings, and *the gradual dissipation of an immense fame.* . . . I very much fear,' he added, 'that your majesty does not see the end of this terrible convulsion.'[2] From time to time real exclamations of grief escape him on the painful position in which he has been placed, and on the cruelty of prolonging 'the *sorrowful agony* of a brother upon the throne of Spain!'[3]

Napoleon did not trouble himself with answering these letters, which in his eyes were merely importunate lamentations. He did not even deign to receive Joseph's ministers, except at very rare intervals, and they never obtained from him any real concession. To clear himself before the Spaniards from the suspicion of having had any share in the decree which broke up their country, Joseph indulged in a thoroughly platonic kind of revenge by himself dividing the whole of Spain, including the provinces beyond the Ebro, into departments. But his subjects showed him no gratitude for such useless respect to their national integrity. A disguised contempt was his only reward, and Joseph resented their ingratitude with an amount of grief and of confidence in his own good intentions not less ridiculous than it is touching. Writing to his wife, he says, 'I hope that posterity may one day pity a great nation for having misunderstood the king which in its bounty Heaven has bestowed upon it!'[4]

However this may be, the expedition into Andalusia proved to be only another great mistake added to all the

[1] See on this subject the Memoirs of Miot de Mélito.
[2] Joseph to Napoleon, August 8, 1810.
[3] *Ibid.*, August 10, 1810.
[4] Joseph to Queen Julie, November 8, 1810.

faults which had already been committed in Spain. It procured us enormous resources, it is true, especially at the outset, and afforded a kind of momentary revival to a monarchy that was dying from inanition; but its sole result, from a military point of view, was to paralyse an army of 70,000 men, who might have been much more usefully employed on other points, in those combats by which the fate of the Peninsula was decided. Having conquered Andalusia with such ease, the army had the utmost difficulty in keeping it. There was no choice between evacuating it completely, which would have been a slur, or remaining there in some sort as prisoners, on pretext of possessing it. Our soldiers seemed to hold Andalusia, but in reality it was Andalusia which held them. From 25,000 to 30,000 men were required before Cadiz; almost as many were needed to keep back the insurgents of Ronda, to mask Gibraltar, and to hold at bay the armies of Murcia and Valencia, commanded by Blake; a corps of observation was, moreover, essential on the side of Badajoz, besides garrisons in the principal towns, with a division in the Sierra Morena and La Mancha. So difficult a task would fully try the powers of the army in Andalusia, as became clearly apparent when Masséna required their help.

CHAPTER XI

TORRES VEDRAS—MASSÉNA AND WELLINGTON—MASSÉNA'S RETREAT—FUENTES DE OÑORO

(*August* 1810–*June* 1811)

WHILE the foregoing events were taking place in the south of the Peninsula, Wellington made no move in support of the Spaniards. All that he had been able to do for them was to remain as long as possible on the Guadiana, so as to hold back one corps of observation in that quarter. Although assailed by the most pressing entreaties, he refused either to run the risk of losing his small army for Areizaga in a campaign undertaken in opposition to his advice, and of which he had foretold the unsuccessful issue,[1] or to attempt a diversion in Old Castile in favour of Andalusia. In that region he would have to fight Ney, Kellerman, and Regnier, whose combined forces were far superior to his own, without mentioning the large reinforcements which were then pouring into Spain. 'I am perfectly aware,' he wrote on this subject to Bartle Frere, 'of the advantage which the general cause would derive from the movement of the British army into Castile, if it be true that the enemy's reinforcements have not yet entered Spain. I should doubt, however, the truth of the report, which states that only 8000 have arrived, both on account of the time which has elapsed since they passed Paris, and because the enemy has hitherto acted with so much caution that I do not believe he would incur the risk of collecting at the Sierra

[1] He predicted Areizaga's defeat in a letter to Col. Roche dated November 19, 1809.

Morena the large force which has lately been collected in that quarter, if the near approach and the expected early arrival in Castile of the reinforcements did not remove all chance of danger from this measure. But these conjectures respecting the probable period of the arrival of the reinforcements would not prevent me from making a movement into Castile, if the enemy was not at the present moment in greater strength in that province than I can bring into the field.'[1]

Independently of these motives, dictated by his superior foresight, Wellington might have alleged the danger of leaving Lisbon uncovered, and also of compromising plans as yet unknown, although so famous hereafter, to which he justly attached the salvation not only of Spain and of the English army, but even to a certain point of the European cause itself. Since Austria had laid down arms by signing the peace of Vienna, and had thus proved the inefficiency of England's last allies—since among the sovereigns of the Continent Napoleon boasted none but courtiers or subjects, Wellington saw that all the resources and all the efforts of his gigantic power would be turned against the only country which still struggled for the liberty of Europe. What could Spain achieve with her bands of insurgents and her defeated armies, albeit so persevering? or the small English army effect against so formidable an adversary, aided by the combined forces of so many nations? But during the very time when the world looked upon all as lost, and Napoleon's proudest enemies were growing weak, Wellington never despaired of the cause he had embraced. Far from allowing himself to be cast down by the magnitude or the imminence of the danger, he derived from that very circumstance, not only the resolution of fighting to the last extremity, but also the energy to conceive and to execute a project which will continue to be the admiration of the world, and an everlasting lesson to nations oppressed by foreign rule.

He had always thought that some day, sooner or later, the whole of Europe would rise against Napoleon's tyranny, provided that an opportunity for such a rising were afforded

[1] Despatches: Wellington to Bartle Frere, January 30, 1810.

to it by a prolonged resistance in certain points. The end to aim at therefore was, in his opinion, not so much to drive the French out of the Peninsula, as the tacticians of the central junta wildly fancied, but rather to keep the contest there alive at any cost, until the moment should arrive for so inevitable and universal a revolt. In view of the new invasion pouring into Spain, he could not dream of undertaking any offensive operations against the French. Even if conducted with genius, they would have rapidly exhausted his very limited forces. His small army, though brave, strong, and well-disciplined, being maintained at the almost invariable figure of 30,000 men, and obliged to submit to the admixture of auxiliaries that were almost valueless, could not have lasted a month amidst the large masses of French troops then in Spain. He therefore resolved to intrench it in strong positions, rendered still more formidable by every resource of defensive warfare, where he might defy superiority in numbers and the risk of surprise, where he could also obtain supplies by sea, and whence if necessary he might embark in case of disaster; where, also, he might take advantage of the distances and the difficulties of communication which were so rapidly exhausting our troops, by creating around us a desert in which we should find it impossible to live. To stand out under these restricted but vigorously conceived conditions, and to resist with indomitable obstinacy until Europe, ashamed to let him succumb, should come to his succour, was the only course which afforded Wellington some chance of success in view of the feeble means at his disposal; and such, with equal firmness and decision, was the one he now adopted. The necessity which suggested it to him in no wise diminishes the merit or originality of an operation which was, one may say, without precedent in military history.

The position he was seeking for he found in the environs of Lisbon, in the peninsula formed by the Tagus at its entrance to the sea. Protected on almost every side either by the ocean or the river, which at this point is nearly as wide as an inland sea, this peninsula was accessible only on

the north where it joined the mainland. There, however, the prolongation of the Sierra d'Estrella presented a series of rugged heights, craggy precipices, and deep ravines filled with torrents, forming a true natural barrier, the strength of which had already struck more than one military observer. In 1799 Sir Charles Stuart, and later the French engineer Colonel Vincent, had made plans of the ground, for the formation of open works, but not of a fortified enclosure.[1]

Wellington was the first who conceived and executed the project of transforming the whole peninsula into a colossal fortress, of more than a hundred miles in circumference. He desired that this fortress should be composed of three concentric enclosures, defended by cannon, and large enough to contain not only his army and the Portuguese allies—comprising the regular troops, the militia, and Ordenanzas—but the whole available population of the Southern provinces of Portugal, with their harvests, their cattle, and their provisions, so that the country surrounding Lisbon should offer no resource whatever to the invaders. He at the same time secured his retreat by means of a spacious and fortified port, in which, should any untoward accident occur, the English army and even the Portuguese troops might embark in safety. This immense citadel extended to the north from Zizembre and the heights of Torres Vedras, which protected its front, as far as Alemquer; thence to the east by Sobral and Alvera it followed the counterforts of the Estrella which overhung the Tagus, and extended to Lisbon, where it was covered alike by the mouth of the river and by the ocean.

Notwithstanding the strength of this position, it is clear from a note addressed by Canning to the Marquis of Wellesley, and from Lord Liverpool's correspondence with Wellington, that the English Cabinet for a long time entertained a marked preference for Cadiz, which no doubt was still more impregnable. But, without in any way denying this advantage, Wellington persisted in his project of defending the lines of Torres Vedras. First, because Cadiz could defend itself, and two centres of resistance were of more

[1] Napier, Peninsular War.

avail than one; secondly, because from Torres Vedras he could advance more easily into the heart of the Peninsula, or, on the other hand, retire from it, as we now occupied Andalusia. Lastly, a much larger army might be held in check there than at the island of Leon, which could be invested with comparatively few troops.[1]

Since the truly disgraceful issue of the Walcheren expedition,—which had cost England so much both in men and money, besides the loss of her influence abroad,—the English Cabinet had in part been renewed by the admission of Perceval, of Lord Liverpool, and Lord Wellesley, the elder brother of Wellington. Nevertheless it continued excessively timid, chiefly owing to its weakness in Parliament. The anger of the opposition at the mismanagement of the war had produced a reaction in the public mind, which fell severely not only upon Chatham and Castlereagh as the authors of that unfortunate expedition, but even on Wellington himself, although he had been overpowered with titles and national rewards. Not to expose himself, to leave nothing to chance, to avoid every doubtful action, was the invariable burden of the song, unceasingly repeated by a ministry which felt that Wellington's first check would drive them from office; it was equivalent to ordering the General never to fight. Although he had his brother in the Cabinet to support his views, and knew better than any one else the true value of prudence, Wellington was irritated by the constant obstacles which encumbered his every act. Lord Liverpool wrote to him on the 10th of March 1810, 'Your chances of successful defence are considered here by all persons, military as well as civil, so improbable, that I could not recommend any attempt at what may be called desperate resistance.'

Such in fact was the prevailing opinion. Wellington answered him, saying: 'Whatever people may tell you, I am not so desirous of fighting desperate battles; if I was, I might fight one any day I please. . . . But I have looked to the great result of our maintaining our position in the Peninsula; and have not allowed myself to be diverted

[1] Despatches: Wellington to Lord Liverpool, March 1, 1810.

from it by the wishes of the allies, and probably of some of our own army, that I should interfere more actively in some partial affairs; . . . and I have not harassed my troops by marches and countermarches, in conformity to the enemy's movements. I believe that the world in the Peninsula begin to believe that I am right. . . . All I beg is, that if I am to be responsible, I may be left to the exercise of my own judgment.'[1]

But he was more sensitive to the ingratitude of his fellow-citizens, and felt it bitterly though he disdained to complain. 'I see,' he writes to Lord Liverpool, 'that the Common Council of the City of London have desired that my conduct should be inquired into . . . I cannot expect mercy at their hands, whether I succeed or fail; and if I should fail, they will not inquire whether the failure is owing to my own incapacity, to the blameless errors to which we are all liable, to the faults or mistakes of others, to the deficiency of our means, to the serious difficulties of our situation, or to the great power and abilities of our enemy. In any of these cases I shall become their victim; but I am not to be alarmed by this additional risk, and whatever may be the consequences, I shall continue to do my best in this country.'[2]

From the beginning of the month of October 1809, with the aid of Colonel Fletcher of the Engineers, he had employed thousands of workmen and peasants, without intermission, in throwing up intrenchments, constructing redoubts, and forming sluices for inundating the plain. He also induced the Portuguese Regency to enforce the old military laws which permitted it to arm the whole population, and distribute pikes to those to whom no muskets could be given. According to an official return of April 1810 the population armed with pikes alone amounted to 219,040 men, a large portion of whom afterwards received muskets, in addition to the 105,000 who had already

[1] Despatches: Wellington to Liverpool, April 2, 1810. See Supplementary Despatches, vols. vi. and vii., Letters from Liverpool to Wellesley.

[2] Despatches, January 2, 1810.

obtained them. The regular Portuguese army, organised by Marshal Beresford, commanded and greatly improved by English officers, amounted to 30,000 men; the remainder consisted of militia recruited in the towns, and of the *Ordenanzas*, or levies of peasants. These troops, though not very formidable on a field of battle, were thoroughly capable of defending the intrenchments.

The Regency had to enact other decrees in order to oblige the inhabitants to move with all their effects within the lines. Although this was more or less a harsh proceeding, it was after all less onerous to them than the certainty of being despoiled by the French army. Wellington at the same time recommended that the *gentlemen* should be requested to stay in the country itself, and form a germ of revolt,[1] and he ordered the destruction of the bridges and the mills on all the streams, excepting at such points as were necessary for his own operations. Lisbon had to submit to the strictness of military rule. A fleet, composed of a large number of frigates and transports, lay under the forts of St. Julien to insure the retreat of the army; and lastly, the subsidy granted to Portugal was increased at Wellington's request to nearly five-and-twenty millions of francs, not including the pay and commissariat of the army, the expenses of which he liquidated with the most rigorous exactness.

These clear and energetic measures, executed in the teeth of the resistance which he encountered from the discouragement and scepticism of his own government, and from the effeminacy, love of routine, and inertness of the Portuguese Regency, were conceived and carried out by Wellington with the full and thorough foresight of the consequences which they would produce, not only for the Spanish, but for the European cause itself. After having studied the enormous preparations for this memorable operation and the lofty thoughts which inspired it, one is amazed to see our authors of memoirs and our military historians, such as Pelet and Marmont, attributing the success which crowned his plans to Wellington's 'lucky star.'

[1] Despatches: To Sir Chas. Stuart, March 1, 1810.

On the contrary, no one ever more closely calculated the bearing of his enterprises, no one ever prepared or better merited his success, no one ever wrested it more obstinately from blind fortune. 'If we can maintain ourselves in Portugal,' he wrote to a member of the Portuguese Regency, 'the war will not cease in the Peninsula, and if the war lasts in the Peninsula, Europe will be saved. I am also of opinion that the position I have chosen for the struggle is good, that it is one calculated by its nature to defend the very heart (*l'âme même*) of Portugal, and that if the enemy cannot drive us from it, he will be obliged to retreat, in which case he will run great risk of being lost, and at all events be forced to abandon Portugal.'[1]

When he wrote these prophetic lines, so long anterior to the event, the English General was a very minor personage compared to the Master of Europe, but it was he who represented moral force as opposed to the brute force of numbers and overweening power. He had on his side, not only the goodness and justice of his cause, but also superiority in effort, in foresight, prudence, and discernment, in great results achieved by small means, in the most calm and inflexible resolve, in the very elements, in short, which above all else insure victory. By these too Wellington has earned the renown of having struck the most decisive blow against Napoleon's overwhelming power. The war of Russia was, it is true, the determining cause of his downfall, but without this wedge of iron, which from 1810 onwards penetrated so deeply into the sides of the giant, paralysing all his movements, who can dare to assert that the war of Russia would ever have taken place?

After having, during the course of six months, constantly announced his departure for Spain, Napoleon abandoned the project, if indeed he ever entertained it—which one may fairly doubt from the noisy publicity given to his promise. In doing this he was influenced either by repugnance to a war of detail which held out no prospect of glory, or, as Jomini says, from dislike to a country that produced so many fanatics. He offered the command of

[1] Despatches: To Don Forjas.

the army in Portugal to that one amongst our generals who, next to himself, had ranked as our first warrior, ever since an iniquitous sentence of banishment had deprived France of the services of Moreau. Masséna had the utmost repugnance to an enterprise of which he very keenly appreciated both the difficulties and the dangers. He entertained no illusions with regard to the Empire and its false grandeur. Born in 1758, and older than the majority of his companions in arms, he considered that he had earned a right to repose by his glorious military services; and his constitution, worn out by so many campaigns and so much fatigue, was beginning to feel the first symptoms of old age. He yielded, however, to Napoleon's entreaties, promises, and flattery, and accepted, though unwillingly, a mission the sad mistakes of which he only partially foresaw.[1]

Masséna was to have under his orders the corps of Ney, Junot, and Regnier, amounting together to 70,000 men. He was to be reinforced later by about 20,000 men, sent from the north under the command of General Drouet, and by Mortier's *corps d'armée*, which, coming from Andalusia, was to enter by the Alentejo, and to join him on the left bank of the Tagus. But this was not all, for Napoleon desired that so soon as Masséna should have entered Portugal the army of Aragon itself should move to his support. Suchet had just ended the sieges of Lerida and of Mequinenza brilliantly, and was about to begin that of Tortosa. The instant Tortosa should have surrendered, he was to leave half his army with Macdonald, who had just replaced the inefficient General Augereau in Catalonia, and to march with the other half as far as Valladolid, where he would be able to support Masséna's operations.[2] Of all these forces, however, Masséna had actually at his disposal only the three *corps d'armée*, and of all the reinforcements so liberally promised to him, he never received more than from seven to eight thousand men under the orders of Drouet. But the important fact was that Masséna had started. Once engaged in this perilous adventure,

[1] General Koch: *Mémoires de Masséna.*
[2] Napoleon to Suchet, July 14, 1810.

he would doubtless find some means of extricating himself from it with honour. As to the rest, Napoleon had his mind made up regarding the English army. Wellington had in all, at the very outside, but 24,000 men; for the Portuguese were of no account, and how could it be supposed that such an army could withstand 70,000 French led by the conqueror of Zurich and Rivoli? Nor did he wish any one to hurry. They had allowed the spring to pass without opening the campaign; the summer should be employed in besieging Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, and the expedition should be delayed until after the great heats. '*I do not wish to enter Lisbon at this moment,*' wrote Napoleon when sending instructions to Masséna, 'because I could not feed the town, the immense population of which obtains all its subsistence by sea'[1]—a very uncommon instance of solicitude, which proves his extraordinary illusion, but which was less meritorious than he imagined!

Besides the fault he committed, first, by not coming to Spain, which deprived him of the opportunity of obtaining correct information as to the Peninsula, then, by permitting the campaign to be made in Andalusia, and thus losing precious time, of which the English took advantage to fortify the lines of Torres Vedras, and lastly, by having created in Spain several detached commands that were incapable alike of sufficing singly or of giving each other mutual support, Napoleon in addition made a grievous mistake in giving Masséna two lieutenants disinclined to obey him; the one, because he had a temper that harmonised with no one but the Emperor—who was Ney; the other, because he had already held the chief command in Portugal, where he was now to serve in a subordinate position—namely Junot. When the Marshal reached Spain, these two generals had invested Ciudad Rodrigo with 50,000 men, while Regnier had taken post at Alcantara on the Tagus. From the outset of his command Masséna was obliged to use the authority and to show the orders of the Emperor to induce them to continue the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo instead of at once beginning the campaign against the English. These

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, May 29, 1810.

dissensions were almost instantly known to the enemy. 'It is said here,' wrote Wellington to his brother Henry Wellesley, then Minister at Cadiz, 'that the French generals have all disagreed, and that Masséna is generally detested by them.'[1] Masséna at the same time perceived that his army was far from having the necessary resources in equipments, ammunition, or provisions, and that the Emperor's favourite maxim, that 'war must feed war,' was difficult of application in a country exhausted by incessant devastation.

Masséna employed the months of June, July, and August 1810, in completing his preparations for the campaign of Portugal, and in besieging Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida. The former was heroically defended by Andrea Herrasti, a veteran of the Spanish army. With a feeble garrison he resisted for upwards of two months every effort made to capture the place by 50,000 men. Wellington was at Celorico, some distance off, lying in wait for a favourable opportunity to succour the town. Andrea Herrasti sent him imploring appeals to advance, and he was full of admiration for the intrepid old man: he wrote to him, it is true, and warmly encouraged him, but avoided giving him any formal promise of help.[2]

The Marquis della Romana also came to Wellington's camp, and entreated him to make some attempt in favour of the besieged. He was the one amongst all the Spanish generals for whom Wellington had most esteem and sympathy, and his own best officers united their entreaties to those of Romana. Nevertheless Wellington allowed the place to fall, without attacking the French. And this resolution must have cost him all the more, since it not only caused him to be accused of treachery by the Spaniards and disapproved of by his friends, but furthermore exposed him to the scoffs of our army and even of Masséna himself. The English general, however, had at that time only 33,000 men at his disposal, including not less than 14,000 Spanish-Portuguese troops.[3] He had been obliged, moreover, to

[1] Letter of June 19, 1810.
[2] Wellington to Andrea Herrasti, June 6, 1810.
[3] Despatches, June 20, 1810.

detach nearly one-half of his forces under command of Hill to check Regnier's corps on the Tagus, and had very little cavalry to oppose to ours, which amounted to nearly 10,000 horse. Had he with so small a force attacked an army of 50,000 men in the open country, where no surprise was possible, he would inevitably have exposed himself to a check, in undeniable proof of which may be noted the earnest desire then entertained at our head-quarters that he should embark in such an enterprise.[1] The defenders of Ciudad Rodrigo no doubt deserved that such risk should be incurred, were it only through respect for their endurance; but Wellington knew that the first disaster of the kind would bring orders from the British Cabinet to embark his army, and from that moment Portugal would be lost and all his plans upset. He consequently refused, and uncomplainingly endured accusations, reproaches, and sarcasm, leaving the onus of his justification to the future, with a courage that is more rare and more difficult than that required for the greatest military exploits. He behaved with the same apparent impassibility during the siege of Almeida, although the command of that town was entrusted to an Englishman, General Cox.

Though for long uneasy as to Napoleon's plans, Wellington began to recover confidence when he perceived that the effective strength of our army in Portugal scarcely exceeded the 70,000 men confided to Masséna, and that Soult, moreover, could not quit Andalusia: 'The French will soon discover,' he wrote to Crawford, 'that they are not strong enough to blockade Cadiz and to attack us at the same time in Portugal.'[2] This was in a word condemning the whole nature of the fault we had committed in occupying Andalusia. From the incoherence of our doings in Spain, he had divined the misunderstanding that existed between Napoleon and his brother Joseph, and congratulated himself upon the results which must ensue therefrom. 'There is something discordant in all their arrangements in Spain,' he wrote to his brother Henry Wellesley. 'Joseph

[1] Masséna to Berthier, July 2, 1810.
[2] Wellington to Crawford, June 20.

divides his kingdom into *préfectures*, while Napoleon divides it into departments. Joseph makes the expedition into Andalusia and the siege of Cadiz, while Napoleon creates the army of Portugal for Masséna. . . . It is impossible that such measures can have been done in concert.'[1]

Towards the middle of July 1810 a secret document of the highest importance fell into his hands, thanks to the guerillas who intercepted all our communications. It was an official return, entitled, '*Position of the troops of the French Empire at the date of June* 1, 1810.' From the study of this paper he learned the stations occupied by our army in every dependency of the Empire as well as the new enterprises in which Napoleon was engaged, and drew the conclusion that the only troops which could be displaced without inconvenience and consequently sent to Spain, were those then occupying the town of Nantes.[2] These latter in fact formed the *corps d'armée* which Drouet was to bring to Masséna, and were the only reinforcements that eventually entered Spain. Such a discovery finally gave him confidence, and he watched the advance of his illustrious antagonists into Portugal without apprehension, so soon as the fall of Almeida, caused by the explosion of a gunpowder magazine, allowed the French to begin more active operations.

Masséna commenced his march on September 16, 1810. His troops were already reduced by at least 10,000 men, by the losses and fatigues incurred at the sieges, by illness, by the garrisons he was compelled to put into the two places he had just captured, and by the detachment which it was necessary to leave on the road in order to collect the soldiers who were quitting the hospitals and to facilitate our communications.[3] Badly informed as to the state of the roads he had to traverse, Masséna confined himself to following the English along the line they had themselves

[1] To Henry Wellesley, June 11, 1810.

[2] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, July 18, 1810.

[3] From the report of the position under date of September 15, Masséna's army counted 61,000 men *present under arms*. See the *Journal histor. de la campagne de Portugal* in 1810-1811, edited from the papers of General Fririon, Chief of the Staff to Masséna.

taken, by Celorico, Vizeu, and the left bank of the Mondego. It was the very worst road he could have chosen. Not only was it completely in ruins, but near the point where the Sierra Alcoba approaches the counterforts of the Sierra Estrella, it presented, as will be seen later, a most dangerous narrow spot of inextricable difficulty. The army carried with it fifteen days' provisions, which had been collected with great trouble. Everywhere on its passage it found the bridges destroyed, the villages abandoned, the fields devastated, and, in Wellington's words, 'an enemy behind every stone.' By ransacking the country, the soldiers at last found wine, and some corn still standing, as well as maize, chestnuts, and a species of eatable gland,[1] but nowhere any traces of inhabitants. 'We are marching across a desert,' wrote Masséna; 'women, children, and old men have all fled; in fact, no guide is to be found anywhere.'[2]

The peasants of the Ordenanza however had not fled, and they harassed our marauders and our stragglers, and even carried off one of our colonels. Masséna, in accordance with a disgraceful practice commenced in Italy and applied by Napoleon himself in Germany, published an order enjoining that all who were taken should be shot as brigands, a cruelty which was one day to be turned against ourselves, when in our turn we learned the humiliation of defeat and invasion. The lesson which Masséna received on this occasion from the English general cannot be too much known, for there is no nation that has not an interest in defending the eternal rights of patriotism. It deserves record all the more because, while bearing the impress of that lofty spirit so gratifying in warriors, it contains amidst all its severity the most delicate flattery of him to whom it was addressed.

Masséna had replied to a first remonstrance by the pretext usually alleged in defence of this species of violence—that the peasants wore no uniforms. 'Those whom you call peasants without uniforms, and highway assassins,' Wellington wrote to him, 'form the Ordenanza of this

[1] The *Intendant Général* Lambert to Berthier, Sept. 23.
[2] Masséna to Berthier, Sept. 15.

country. They are a portion, as I have already had the honour to assure you, of the paid military corps, and act under military law. It seems that you require, in order to be admitted to the enjoyment of the rights of war, that every one must wear a uniform; *but you ought to remember that you yourself added to the glory of the French army when commanding soldiers who had no uniform.*'[1] Masséna had shown himself much more humane in Spain than our other generals, as Wellington himself has remarked. His correspondence is exempt from that declamatory style of bravado then the fashion in our armies, and shows largeness of mind, with much strength and simplicity. Hence he was capable of understanding language which though courteous was at the same time severe, and the truth and justice of which it was above all impossible to deny. Nor is it certain that beneath the uniform of an Imperial Marshal he did not sometimes heave a sigh of regret for those days of poverty, youth, and glory in which he fought for his country instead of risking his life for the caprice of the most exacting of masters.

'I am sorry,' added Wellington, 'that your Excellency should feel some personal inconvenience from the fact of the Portuguese quitting their homes on the approach of the French army. It is my duty to make those retreat whom I have not the means of defending. Moreover, the orders which I have given to this effect were scarcely necessary, for those who remember the invasion of their country in 1807, and the usurpation of the government of their prince, at a time of perfect peace, when there was not a single Englishman in their country, will find difficulty in believing your declarations that you are making war only on the English.'

On the 26th of September the army, continuing on the bank of the Mondego, reached the narrow end of the kind of funnel through which that river passes before traversing Coïmbra. On one side the Sierra d'Alcoba, on the other a craggy ramification of the Estrella, gradually advanced upon the narrow space, followed by the road and the river, until

[1] Wellington to Masséna, Sept. 24.

they formed a gorge from which troops could not possibly escape. The English army occupied all the heights from Busaco to Puente de Murcelha. The position was formidable, but it was necessary either to force the passage or to retrograde as far as Vizeu in order to debouch upon the Vouga, which would have been by far the best plan, but which now seemed a disgrace not to be thought of. The attack, consequently, was resolved upon, despite the objections of Ney, who considered success impossible from the moment that no attempt had been made to take Busaco by surprise. Masséna's army still counted nearly 60,000 men, while the Anglo-Portuguese troops consisted of not more than 50,000, but their inferiority in numbers was compensated for by the strength of this impassable barrier. It was useless to think of passing by Puente del Murcelha, the heights of which were crowned by intrenchments,[1] so that the efforts of our army were concentrated against Busaco. During the whole day of September 27 the corps of Regnier and of Ney fought desperately on the abrupt slopes of the mountain. More than once our regiments, charging with irresistible impetuosity, reached its uneven crests, but, having arrived there, were received with deadly fire by batteries skilfully placed, while reserves of infantry forced them by bayonet charges down the ravines they had succeeded in crossing. The heights were covered with our wounded and our dead, amongst whom Generals Merle and Graindorge, several colonels, and a large number of officers, were killed. Not one of our divisions, however, succeeded in establishing themselves on the summit. In the evening, despite our efforts, desperate although somewhat confused, as must always happen on such uneven ground, it became evident that we could not hope to force the position. We had lost 4500 men killed or wounded, while the Anglo-Portuguese had scarcely lost 1200.[2] Moreover, as their able general had foreseen when he decided upon defending the position at Busaco, this first success had redoubled

[1] Masséna's report to Berthier, Oct. 4, 1810.

[2] Wellington's report, Sept. 30, 1810. General Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna.*

their confidence: 'The French must either carry the post or die of hunger,' Wellington exclaimed to Stuart on the very evening of the battle.

There was a third course, the possibility of which Wellington did not seem to contemplate, for a general like Masséna,—that of retreating. And he would have had to adopt that course, no matter how much it might have cost him, but for the unhoped-for discovery, when least expected, of a small mountain pathway, by which the Sierra d'Alcobal could be crossed a little to the north by the Col de Caramula. This pathway, which, happily, was practicable for artillery, descended upon Sardâo and the road of Coïmbra, and consequently turned the English positions.

Masséna hastened to send forward our troops by this path during the whole of the 28th, while feigned attacks occupied the attention of the enemy in front. Before long the whole army was able to complete its movement upon Sardâo. Wellington has frequently been reproached with not having understood the importance, nor even suspected the existence, of this Caramula road, which rendered his victory useless. But such an accusation is refuted by the simplest examination of his correspondence, for not only did he order Colonel Trant to occupy Caramula with his militia, which was sufficient to guard a mountain road, but on the 21st of September, when writing to General Cotton to inform him of his intention of giving battle, he adds: 'Hill, unfortunately, is a day behindhand, *and there is a road to our right by which we may be turned and cut off from Coïmbra.*' Trant's absence from so essential a post was due to one of those chances which so often occur in war. At the very moment when the order was despatched to him, he had been called off in another direction by the general commanding at Oporto, and when he returned to Sardâo, our troops were already there. Wellington has been more justly reproached [1] with not having taken advantage of our movement to attempt an attack upon our flank, which might have had a great chance of success; but it is probable enough, judging from all his conduct in other matters, that he had powerful

[1] Napier, Peninsular War.

motives for not undertaking it. The result of the victory of Busaco, especially from a moral point of view, was none the less valuable to him, for it had to an extraordinary degree inspirited and emboldened the Portuguese auxiliaries, who hitherto had been so unreliable, but who on this occasion behaved with the utmost steadiness alongside his own troops.[1]

Our army regained all its customary confidence in consequence of the successful manœuvre which had caused the fall of the defences of Busaco. They felt convinced that they were about to approach Lisbon, and march to the very extremity of the Peninsula, certain this time of meeting the English where they could retreat no farther. On their road they passed through the town of Coïmbra, which was given up to pillage. Masséna was obliged to leave his sick and wounded there, with a detachment to guard them, amounting altogether to 5000 men, which reduced his army to 55,000. On the 8th of October 1810 our advance-guard, under command of Montbrun, arrived at Santarem on the Tagus. On the 10th it entered Villa Nova, a short distance behind the enemy's rear-guard, with which it had frequent skirmishes, when, all of a sudden, the latter disappeared as if by enchantment, and nothing remained in front but an impenetrable line of fortified heights stretching away to an extraordinary extent.

The army in fact had arrived at the foot of those lines of Torres Vedras, now so famous, but the existence of which, up to that moment, they had not suspected. Masséna himself had never heard them spoken of except vaguely at Coïmbra, and knew nothing either of their strength or their extent. And, more inexplicable still, Napoleon, who was situated at the central point for information of all descriptions, and had his agents in England and

[1] Wellington's report. The *Moniteur*, which had hitherto published all Masséna's bulletins, abruptly stopped their publication. It transformed the sanguinary check at Busaco into a victory, in which 'the English had been attacked, turned and quickly pursued.' The combat of Busaco was a mere feint in order to turn the position, and we had only lost 200 men killed (*Moniteur* of Oct. 20 and Nov. 23, 1810).

in the whole of Europe, was only now for the first time about to learn the existence of those immense works, upon which, for upwards of a year, so many thousand men had been employed. Masséna caused reconnaissances to be made during the next few days, along the whole of the enemy's line, but they only served to convince him more fully of the strength of those impregnable intrenchments.

The villages in every direction were covered by abattis, the valleys closed in by redoubts, the plains inundated by dams across the torrents. The information which was gradually elicited from prisoners and from the very few inhabitants who had not fled, still further increased the feeling of stupefaction produced by the aspect of such formidable works. Masséna learnt that at about two leagues behind this line a second and much stronger one existed, where the army would be certain of shelter should the first be taken; that between the two were large table-lands, where the whole of the Anglo-Portuguese forces could be concentrated on any given point, at the first signal from the numberless telegraph posts established on the heights; lastly, that still farther back, behind the second line, a third barrier rose serving as a citadel to this colossal fortress, and strong enough to protect the whole army during such time as might be required to enable it to embark in safety. No definite and complete report of the defences of Torres Vedras exists, but there is an official paper, drawn up a few months before the completion of the works, which gives a sufficiently clear idea of what they must have been at the time our troops reached them. From this it appears that in the month of June 1810 the defences then finished or in course of construction comprised a total number of 127 redoubts, mounted with 511 pieces of artillery, and containing about 32,000 men, exclusive of the army of operation.[1] This latter numbered 30,000 English and 35,000 Portuguese, soon to be joined by 10,000 Spaniards under the orders of Romana, and forming a total of 75,000 men, without counting the militia and the Ordenanzas.

[1] Report by Lieut.-Col. Fletcher, R.E., to Wellington, June 25, 1810.

This overwhelming discovery, combined with the difficulty of procuring provisions, the interruption of communications entailed by the taking of Coïmbra, and the loss of the 5000 men left there, produced a most disastrous moral effect upon our army, but in no wise abated Masséna's courage. In this moment of supreme peril, although stopped short by insurmountable obstacles, far from all support, surrounded by enemies, deprived of provisions, and badly seconded by lieutenants who were jealous of his authority, he never flinched. He again appears in the grand character which had made him famous when defending Genoa. Silencing the objections of some and the murmurs of others, he extorted admiration from his adversaries by his unshaken resolution. Without for an instant admitting the possibility of retreat, which would have been equivalent to abandoning Portugal, he decided that the army should remain in presence of the English positions, until reinforcements from Napoleon would allow him to attack them with advantage. Until then, no attack could be dreamt of. Singular ignorance of facts alone can have led to the supposition that an audacious *coup* would have had any chance of success. Wellington's views on this subject are quite sufficient to prove this, especially as no one was less inclined, in general, to exaggerate his own advantages.

The constantly recurring opinion expressed in all his letters is to the effect that the French forces were utterly insufficient for the attainment of their object. Writing to Admiral Berkeley on the 17th of October, he says, 'I am firmly of opinion the enemy cannot succeed; but as I know that their situation is desperate, we must expect that there is no risk they will not incur to attain their object, and I know enough of operations of this kind to be aware that nobody can be certain of their result.'[1] Ten days later he wrote to England that the arrival even of Mortier's corps caused him no uneasiness, and that he was surprised that Masséna had been able to hold out so long, considering his utter want of provisions.[2] And in truth this constituted

[1] Despatches. [2] To Lord Liverpool, Oct. 27, 1810.

his greatest difficulty, resulting from the system, alike barbarous and improvident, by which our armies were not allowed to possess magazines, or ever to pay for their food —in presence of an enemy who scrupulously paid for his; to live upon requisitions, or in other words by rapine; for the contributions in kind which were regularly paid for in the towns became in the country parts nothing but fearful pillage.

Happily for us, Wellington's orders had been only imperfectly carried out in the Beira and Alentejo districts, and the French detachments who ransacked the country in every direction for fifteen or twenty leagues around still found some provisions in that neighbourhood. But these were in general torn from unfortunate peasants who had taken refuge with their families on the mountains and in the woods, and were thus left to die of hunger. Such scenes of violence, constantly repeated, demoralised our soldiers and developed true habits of brigandage amongst them. Increasing scarcity of provisions gave rise to savage and cruel behaviour, which however had long since ceased to be considered disgraceful in the army. On this point we possess the testimony of a witness above suspicion, who took part in this frightful war in Spain, and even received his command from Masséna's own hands. 'Detachments,' writes Marmont, 'were formed in each regiment for the purpose of exploring the country, and carrying off whatever they could find. If they met a Portuguese, they seized him and put him to the torture, to force him to reveal the places where provisions were concealed.' Hanging for shorter or longer periods, till the face turned red or blue—called *au rouge* and *au bleu*—were the first methods. If these failed the torture was continued till death.[1] Such was the system of civilisation employed by Napoleon at the very time when he was compelling his Senate to call him the 'Regenerator of Spain.'

Such atrocities sufficiently proved the wisdom of the English general in advising the Portuguese to bring all their provisions within the lines. It cannot be disputed

[1] *Mémoires de Marmont*, vol. iv.

that his orders, though apparently harsh, were in reality most salutary for the inhabitants and most disastrous for the French. Had they been strictly obeyed, Masséna could not have remained one fortnight in front of Torres Vedras. The Russians, in the systematic devastation by which they opposed Napoleon during their retreat in 1812, were only applying Wellington's method. That method was the only efficacious manner of combating the convenient but dangerous habit, which our armies had contracted, of drawing all their sustenance from the invaded country, and living at the expense of the inhabitants. It was a terrible but victorious reply to the savage axiom that 'war ought to feed war.'

Meanwhile the English general, although he did not suffer behind his lines from the same difficulties in feeding his troops, who were provisioned by sea, and though he had every reason to be satisfied with the state of his army and the excellent spirit of his officers, who varied their military labours by shooting and fishing,[1]—had no less serious annoyances to contend with, caused by the Portuguese Regency, and by the ever-increasing uneasiness of the English Cabinet, with whom he found it impossible to reason.

The Regency had always hoped that Wellington would succeed in keeping the war on the frontiers of Portugal, and ever since the capital had been menaced, lost no occasion of annoying and thwarting him, or showing him ill-will. The Patriarch of Lisbon and the Principal Souza were the hottest of his insensate opponents. At one time they accused him of temporising, at another found fault with his harsh orders, although they were essential to the carrying out of those measures in the Alentejo which had been effected in the other provinces ; or with the privations which had been imposed in the common interest of all, or again with the supplementary works which he had executed on the left bank of the Tagus. More than once Wellington had reason to fear disturbances in Lisbon. He succeeded, however, in imposing silence upon Souza, by threatening

[1] Lord Londonderry : Story of the Peninsular War.

to have him transported beyond the seas, and before long orders arrived from the Brazils, where the Regent had taken refuge, which made the members of the Portuguese Government perceive the necessity of submitting to the plans of the English general. On the other hand, the Liverpool-Perceval ministry, whose existence was endangered by a return of the king's insanity, recommended Wellington to be more cautious than ever; while the newspapers and some of his own officers reproached him for not attacking Masséna's enfeebled army.

He admitted that he could do so with great chance of success. But he also knew by our intercepted correspondence that Masséna was most anxious to be attacked; and in the event of any check, which might of course occur, he would by such an act open a road for the French across his lines to Lisbon and the ships, and all would then be lost. Why should he run such a risk when he was sure of succeeding in time without in any way exposing himself? Moreover, as he remarks with perfect justice, his aim consisted less in driving the French out of Portugal than in exhausting their forces to so low a point as would enable him to strike them effectually. Until then, what would be the use of making them evacuate certain provinces? It would simply oblige them to make some large concentrations of troops against which it would become impossible to struggle. The provinces which they had evacuated, when once freed from their presence, never again took part in the common cause, a fact of which Galicia was a striking proof. It was far better to keep their forces scattered in a manner that would wear them out, and leave the guerillas to act against them. 'It is certainly astonishing,' he added, in concluding these acute observations, 'that the enemy has been able to remain in this country so long;' and Masséna's situation he considered as 'an extraordinary instance of what a French army can do.'[1]

Towards the middle of November, Masséna, having completely exhausted all the resources of the ground upon which he had encamped, and finding his position

[1] Despatches: Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Dec. 21, 1810.

becoming less and less safe as his forces were diminishing, by a most skilful manœuvre withdrew his line of investment some leagues to the rear. According to his calculation, the army had lost 8000 men since he had quitted Almeida.[1] He established his head-quarters with Regnier's corps at Santarem, between the Tagus and the Rio Mayor, a position in the midst of marshes, accessible only by a narrow road, and which, even by the admission of his adversaries, was the strongest in Portugal. Junot occupied Olcanhede and Torres Novas, while Ney's corps extended from Thomar to Punhete; he encamped his cavalry at Leyria, at the back of the Estrella, in order to hold the road to Coïmbra. In these new positions the army found itself within reach of other means of subsistence, and capable of advantageously resisting every attack by the enemy. It could hardly be affirmed that Masséna was blockading the English lines, as Wellington had his communications free with the Alentejo, and obtained his provisions by sea; but he pursued an offensive and menacing attitude towards the English, which would permit him to attack them the instant that Napoleon should supply him with the means. General Eblé, by his order, occupied himself actively in constructing bridges across the Zezere, and in making preparations of a more extensive and difficult description, which were required for the construction of a bridge over the Tagus opposite Punhete. The bridge, for which Eblé had to provide the materials by dint of patience, tenacity, and intelligent industry, was indispensable, not only for subsequent co-operation with Mortier's corps coming from Andalusia, but also in the event of the arrival of the reinforcements coming from the north. In fact, an attack upon the lines of Torres Vedras could have no chance of success, unless made simultaneously from both banks of the Tagus. Although the lines on the left bank were wellnigh invulnerable, on account of the extraordinary width of the Tagus at its mouth—whence that part has been named La mer de Paille, it was possible, notwithstanding, to throw shells into the lower parts of Lisbon, at the point where the

[1] Masséna to Berthier, Oct. 29, 1810.

river joins the sea at Almada, and perhaps even to force the fleet to retire. This danger, though at first overlooked by Admiral Berkeley, at a later date made Wellington determine to fortify Almada.

Our communications continued to be interrupted; and we knew nothing of what was passing in France or the rest of the Peninsula. To carry a letter from one part of Spain to another, five hundred men at least were required, and often two thousand. According to King Joseph himself, out of eighty prisoners sent from Andalusia, only forty arrived at Madrid, and ten at the outside reached Bayonne.[1] Often not a single one reached his destination, and on such occasions it was found that the generals themselves had made a traffic of liberating them.[2] Masséna, therefore, had good reason to suppose that the pressing despatches in which he had besought Napoleon to send him succour could never have reached Berthier. Early in November, therefore, he sent off General Foy, an educated, able, and eloquent officer, to Paris, under protection of a strong escort, instructing him to give the Emperor all the information likely to enlighten him upon the situation of the army.

General Foy arrived in Paris on the 22d of November. Speedily admitted to an audience by the Emperor, he found him full of prejudice against Masséna, and of delusions as to the possibility of terminating the war, although discontented with all his generals, with the sole exception of Suchet. Foy had no difficulty in justifying his chief and proving that all his operations had been dictated by circumstances and the force of things; adding, moreover, to this justification a frank and complete statement of the wants and sufferings of the army, of the insufficiency of Masséna's forces in presence of the formidable defences of Torres Vedras; and lastly, the necessity of sending him very large reinforcements, if it was desired that he should achieve success.

Such a statement, made by an eye-witness who had

[1] Joseph to Napoleon, August 31, 1810.

[2] This fact is stated by Joseph, and by Napoleon himself, Sept. 17, to Berthier.

shared all the sufferings and trials of the army in Portugal, and an officer highly esteemed both for character and intellect, ought from its very nature to have dissipated every illusion and ended every misunderstanding. It was Napoleon's last chance of repairing the faults he had committed in Spain. Drouet's two divisions were no longer sufficient; a reinforcement of at least 100,000 men was necessary; nay more, Napoleon should have gone in person and thus put an end at once to the rivalries amongst his generals, and give one single impetus to all the operations. Meanwhile it was essential to be at peace with Europe, in other words to abandon a policy of invasion, provocation, and adventure. This, however, was too much to expect from the Emperor, already engaged in a dozen fresh enterprises, and impelled by the fatal tendency of his passions.

While announcing General Foy's arrival in the *Moniteur*, he continued to deceive the nation as to the position of the army in Portugal; and, moreover, insulted it in the midst of its distress, by publishing that 'it *had a large, abundant supply* of bread, meat, rice, wine, rum, sugar, and coffee!' According to his account the army had had nothing but success.[1] Such apparently was the sole effect of so great and severe a lesson, and this last delay accorded to him by fortune he allowed to pass by without understanding how to profit by it. He had just achieved the fatal annexation of the Hanseatic Towns, of the Valais, and of the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg, and was organising a great army wherewith to invade Russia; contemplating, as the most simple matter possible, a fresh war which would force him to extend his lines of operation from Cadiz to Moscow! He sent back General Foy with the amplest assurances of assistance, but without taking any steps for saving his army in Portugal. It almost seemed as if he henceforward considered the affairs of Spain as quite a secondary matter, which he was certain of settling the moment he should have completed the conquest of Europe.

Till that moment the war apparently might, without any

[1] *Moniteur* of Nov. 23 and 29, 1810.

inconvenience, be allowed to drag its slow length along, and our generals be abandoned to their own resources. The orders which he forwarded to Drouet and to Soult show how thoroughly he understood the importance of Masséna's operations and the gravity of his situation; nevertheless, they entirely lacked the precision that was necessary to have made them of any use. He told them both that *everything depended upon the Tagus*, that the first essential point was to assist Masséna, and to drive the English out of the Peninsula; but to these injunctions he added instructions which necessarily paralysed their effect. For instance, while ordering Drouet to hasten to the support of Masséna, he at the same time desired him 'not to let himself be cut off from Almeida.'[1] To Soult he expressed displeasure at the detention of Mortier's corps at Seville, while Romana was allowed to escape and to join Wellington; he told him 'that the siege of Cadiz could not be resisted by the wretched troops who were shut up in that town,' and that his great aim should be to send a *corps d'armée* to the Tagus, between Montalvâo and Villaflor, where Masséna was expecting it. But he fixed the strength of this *corps d'armée* at *ten thousand men*, a number so very inadequate that it never could have reached its destination.[2]

Marshal Soult was only too glad to find some pretext for disobedience, and felt no anxiety to help Masséna or increase the glory of a rival. Indeed, he had enough to do to defend himself against the incessant incursions of the defenders of Cadiz upon the flanks of the besieging army, made by landing a few detachments at a short distance from the place; as well as against sorties from Gibraltar, the guerillas of Ronda, and the frequent attacks by the army of Murcia. He therefore made use of the difficulty of sending the demanded succour as a reason for sending none whatever. Moreover, he had his own private opinion as to the amount of co-operation which he was bound to give to Masséna. And, when at length he saw the impossibility of any longer resisting the urgent solicitations that

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, Nov. 20 and 22, 1810.
[2] Berthier to Soult, Dec. 4, 1810.

poured in to him from every quarter, and finally decided on aiding his illustrious colleague, instead of giving the slightest effective support to the army in Portugal, he, as Masséna wittily remarked,[1] only used it as an advanced post from which to undertake the sieges of Olivença and Badajoz, under the pretext of not being able to leave such important strongholds in the rear of his army.

Good will was not the point in which General Drouet failed, but he erred through excessive scrupulosity, as much as Soult had erred by its absence. Towards the end of December he led the succours into Portugal which had been so long announced and so ardently looked for. But he brought with him neither provisions nor money, and the much vaunted reinforcement had dwindled into some 8000 men lacking every requisite, and composed of the remnants of the Conroux division, with the detachment which Masséna had left at Almeida under command of General Gardanne. Drouet had been forced to start without waiting for his second division, which was still in the north. Preoccupied with the desire of reconciling contradictory instructions which, on the one hand, ordered him to assist Masséna, and on the other to keep his communications with Almeida open—two operations which were easy to carry out on paper in Paris, but were impracticable in Portugal—Drouet would have been of but trifling utility even if the reinforcements he brought had been more considerable.

The winter passed in this manner, amidst terrible privations bravely borne. General Eblé, by an activity little short of miraculous, had finished his preparations for the two bridges to be thrown across the Tagus; but it was impossible to use them until Mortier's corps should show itself upon the left bank. Reduced to its own effective strength, Masséna's army was utterly incapable of operating upon both banks at one and the same time; for to divide itself in presence of an enemy which, thanks to the defences of Torres Vedras, could move in a solid body from one bank to the other, would be to expose itself to inevitable

[1] Masséna to Berthier, March 20, 1811.

ruin. Moreover, the passage of the Tagus, always hazardous on account of the frequent sudden rise of its waters and its extreme width, was every day becoming more and more difficult. Wellington's attention had for a long time past been fixed upon the dockyards of Punhete, and he had constructed small forts and erected batteries at certain distances on the left bank, besides making his cavalry and militia perpetually scour that side along its entire length. In the end, he there maintained a *corps d'armée* under Beresford, ready to march upon any troops that might come from Andalusia.

General Foy's return in the beginning of February 1811 restored a ray of confidence and hope to the army, although it was soon to be followed by a fresh deception. Full of the Emperor's promises and of his own delusions, the General announced the imminent approach of Soult as a certainty, at the head of an army of succour. As if to confirm the truth of his words, sounds of artillery, dulled by distance but yet distinct, were to be heard, from the 10th to the 15th of February, in the direction of Badajoz. A few days afterwards, however, the wind changed, when nothing more was heard, and those distant and evanescent sounds were all the co-operation which the army of Portugal was to obtain from Soult.

Forced at length by formal orders to march to Masséna's assistance, Soult had advanced to the Guadiana towards the middle of January, with some 20,000 men, and had taken Olivença, after a few days' resistance. He was now making the formal siege of Badajoz, while Massena's soldiers were dying of hunger and counting the hours for his arrival. Indeed he seemed inclined to expect that statues would be erected to him for his behaviour. He answered Berthier's reproaches in the tone of a great but much calumniated spirit, alleging in his justification that if he had sent 10,000 men to Portugal, as the Emperor had desired, the reinforcement would never have reached its destination; which was certainly true, but in nowise excused him for not having sent 20,000. He promised to take Cadiz immediately, if the Emperor would only allow

him to blockade it by one of his squadrons; a very practicable project certainly, provided Admiral Collingwood, who had burnt five of our ships of war at no great distance, had been inclined to let us do so. Lastly, he 'implored the Emperor to send some trustworthy officer to examine into his conduct and even to take his place. As for him, he could not possibly do more, and a glorious death was all he now desired.'[1]

Better than dying would it have been to have attempted, even with but slight chance of success, one of those bold energetic strokes which have often raised the fame of our great generals to so glorious a height. But for some years past all had become lowered in tone, in audacity, in ambition, nay, in genius; and as Wellington remarked when Ney was conducting the siege operations at Ciudad Rodrigo, before Masséna's arrival, 'this is not the way in which the French have conquered Europe.'[2] The whole month of February passed without anything appearing on the left bank of the Tagus, or the slightest symptom of encouragement being received from Soult. The sufferings of the army meanwhile were becoming intolerable. The country we had occupied for nearly six months was so wasted and devastated for fifteen leagues around that the English army, after our departure, found houses there filled with dead, and numbers dying from pure inanition.[3] It at last became necessary to think of leaving the spot, the witness of so much labour, perseverance, and useless sacrifice; but even then Masséna's indomitable spirit, untouched by that discouragement which had weakened the proudest and most courageous of his comrades, could not bend to the idea of retreat. To seek another encampment where his army might find means of subsistence, until it should be again capable of resuming the offensive, was the only concession he would consent to make to the unfortunate circumstances of the moment.

A new station might be taken up by the army either in the Alentejo, by passing altogether to the left bank of the

[1] Soult to Berthier, Jan. 22 and 25, 1811.
[2] To Henry Wellesley, June 11, 1810. [3] Napier.

Tagus, with its line of retreat upon Andalusia, or behind the Mondego, fifteen leagues in rear of its actual position. To pass into the Alentejo was not only to abandon every offensive operation against the English, for no bridge could be held on the Tagus, but it would also give over the whole of Old Castile to their incursions.[1] On the Mondego, on the contrary, the French would continue to hold them in check, while preserving their base of operation at Ciudad Rodrigo, and thus cover the centre of the Peninsula. Masséna chose the latter course. Deceiving the enemy by simultaneous demonstrations on the front of his line, from Punhete to Leyria, and thus keeping Wellington in a state of doubt as to whether he would cross the Tagus at Punhete or return by Leyria upon Coïmbra, he, with wonderful skill, took advantage of his adversary's uncertainty to remove his sick, his baggage, and the great bulk of his army, by the routes which lead from Thomar, on the one side, to Pombal, and on the other to Espinhal. On the 8th of March almost the whole army, after three days' march, had vanished beyond the Estrella. On the 11th, it advanced upon Coïmbra, where Ney, who occupied Pombal with a strong rear-guard, had an engagement, for the first time, with the English troops who were in pursuit.

Montbrun had advanced upon the Mondego with his cavalry, but could not, as he had flattered himself, capture Coïmbra, where he found the bridge broken and the approaches to it occupied in force by Colonel Trant's militia. But Coïmbra was indispensable for the occupation of the line of the Mondego, and must therefore be taken at any cost before we became hard pressed by the English army. Everything, consequently, depended on the resistance which our rear-guard could make to the enemy. The combat of Redinha, where Ney with admirable steadiness sustained the shock of the English who poured down upon him from every side, raised hopes that he would gain the time necessary for the construction of the bridge of boats, without which the capture of Coïmbra was impossible. But,

[1] Masséna's report to Berthier, March 6, 1811.

whether from some temporary fit of despondency, or some secret spite against Masséna, to whose authority he submitted with the utmost impatience, Marshal Ney, subsequently so grand in a far more difficult retreat, showed neither the same coolness nor the same obstinacy at Condeixa. Disturbed at seeing himself menaced upon his left by an advanced detachment, he fell back, after a short resistance, in the direction of Miranda de Corvo, and abandoned the defiles of Condeixa to the enemy. This act alone rendered all encampment upon the Mondego impossible, for the passage of the river could not be undertaken with the certainty of being attacked during the operation.[1] Masséna therefore had no resource but to ascend it by Puente de Murcelha, in the direction of Ciudad Rodrigo, following a route parallel to the one by which he had entered Portugal. The English made another attempt at Foz d'Aronce to drive in our rear-guard, after which they ceased to trouble our retreat by combats, which, though sanguinary, were utterly fruitless.

Masséna returned to the frontier of Spain, deeply grieved and sore at heart, not only at having been sacrificed and made to play such a part at the end of so glorious and long a career, but also for the shameful manner in which he had been abandoned after the many fine promises made to him. In this perilous retreat he had not lost one gun, one baggage-waggon, nor one invalid,[2] a result entirely due to his own unassisted energy; for, from the moment of his arrival at Pombal, Ney had loudly asserted that all the ammunition and military waggons ought to be destroyed in order to facilitate the march of the troops.[3] His army, reduced to 40,000 men, quite as much by privations as by fighting, had neither provisions, ammunition, nor shoes, nor any horses in a state capable of enduring long fatigue, while the uniforms of his soldiers were in shreds. Moreover, so accustomed were they to constant success, that the discipline which they had preserved amidst victory disappeared under their reverses.

[1] Masséna to Berthier, March 19, 1811.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, March 31, 1811.

But greater difficulties than any he had yet endured awaited Masséna. Arrived at Celorico on the 10th of March 1811, this intrepid commander, who would not yet admit that he was vanquished, and moved away from Portugal with deep regret, conceived the project of turning back towards the Tagus by Plasencia and Coria, a position in which he could at least maintain the defensive, and manœuvre upon the flanks of the English in the event of their advancing into Old Castile. Consequently he collected information as to the possibility of maintaining himself there. But the project was no sooner known by Marshal Ney than he gave the finishing stroke to his bad conduct towards his chief since the opening of the campaign by writing Masséna an outrageous letter, informing him that he peremptorily refused to execute such a movement, unless commanded to do so by an express order from the Emperor. A formal statement of the drawbacks attendant upon such an operation on Plasencia accompanied this declaration—a step unprecedented on the part of a subordinate.[1] Masséna's only answer consisted in repeating his order to prepare for the execution of the movement. Ney, on his side, insisted on the Emperor's orders being communicated to him, declaring anew his firm intention of not obeying unless they were shown to him: 'I know,' he said, at the end of his second letter, 'that in thus formally opposing myself to your intentions I am incurring great responsibility, but even if I am to be dismissed or to lose my head, I will not follow the move on Plasencia and Coria of which your Excellency speaks to me, unless, I repeat, it is ordered by the Emperor.'[2]

Whatever might be the character of its author, such a letter could never have been written in any army except one where the sentiment of duty and respect for discipline had deteriorated to a dreadful degree. Amongst troops who preserve the spirit of abnegation, which is the very soul of military honour, public spirit reacts upon individuals, and is alone sufficient to prevent such errors. The fact

[1] Ney to Masséna, March 22, 2 o'clock P.M.
[2] Ney to Masséna, March 22, 4 o'clock P.M.

was therefore in itself an alarming revelation of the moral state of the army, showing that it had sunk to a degree of lassitude and discouragement which forbade any hope of its making the great efforts necessary in an active campaign: 'It is sufficient,' wrote Masséna, 'for the enemy to show the heads of a few columns in order to intimidate the officers and make them loudly declare that the whole of Wellington's army is in sight.' Ultimately, the information which arrived from Estremadura proved that there would be the utmost difficulty in obtaining means of subsistence there, and Regnier had also compromised the plan by allowing himself to be surprised at Sabugal. Masséna was consequently obliged, much against his will, to be satisfied with leading his troops towards Ciudad Rodrigo and Salamanca, after depriving Ney of his command, and placing the sixth corps under the orders of General Loison.

Early in April Masséna had a foretaste of the disgrace which awaited him as a reward for his long trials: 'Succeed,' Napoleon often said; 'I judge men only by results!'[1] Masséna had failed to observe this great precept. A letter from Berthier, dated March 29, 1811, conveyed to him the Emperor's censure, but thinly veiled, on the subject of the operations of the army in Portugal. After having so imperiously ordered him to march straight ahead against the English, whose weakness and small numbers were so confidently guaranteed to him, he was now reproached with 'having shown too much audacity in attacking the position at Busaco,' and for having, after Busaco, advanced up to the lines of Torres Vedras—of which no one knew the existence! The Emperor, said Berthier, would have stopped at Coïmbra, would then have fortified himself, have made magazines, have raised the spirits of the troops, etc.—advice always very easy to give after the event; but unmerited and almost indecent sarcasm when inflicted upon so illustrious a soldier, whose misfortune had been caused by Napoleon's own carelessness and want of foresight. To estimate the worth of such reproaches, it is sufficient to recall the impatience displayed by Napoleon at the outset

[1] *Mémoires de Mollien.*

of the campaign, and thus appreciate what his impressions would have been if the marshal had declined the combat.

Meanwhile Masséna's fortunate rival, compensated at last for the jealousies, fears, distrusts, sinister predictions and passionate criticisms, of which his great undertaking had been the object, was overpowered with marks of gratitude and admiration by England. The Houses of Lords and Commons passed the most flattering votes of thanks to him,[1] and all parties joined in one universal outburst of national feeling. The Ministry, which a few days before Masséna's retreat had written to him through Lord Liverpool, reproaching him with the scale of his expenses, and signifying that he must diminish them,[2] now showed him nothing but the most respectful deference. He alone had foreseen everything, he alone had been wise, he alone had understood the sort of tactics to be employed against Napoleon; in fact, to him alone did the world owe the only great check which, up to that period, had ever been inflicted on the Imperial power upon the Continent; and from that moment forward Wellington obtained an ascendency that became more and more marked in the direction, not only of military, but also of all political affairs.

Far from reposing on his great success, he instantly prepared to follow it up by striking further blows at his enemy. Owing to the reinforcements which his government no longer refused him, as well as to the dispersion of Masséna's army, which was dying of hunger at Salamanca as it had done in Portugal, Wellington found himself strong enough to venture on dividing his troops into two *corps d'armée*, operating simultaneously in Estremadura and Old Castile. He at once resolved to retake the places captured by us in both provinces—namely, Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo in the one, and Badajoz in the other, which latter had surrendered to Soult on the 12th of March. Assuming however, with the truest sagacity, that the provisions at Almeida must have been much diminished by Masséna's unfortunate army, he contented himself with merely invest-

[1] Resolutions, April 26, 1811.
[2] Lord Liverpool to Wellington, Feb. 20, 1811.

ing that town, while he sent Beresford forward to besiege Badajoz.

The French army of Portugal had scarcely recovered from its fatigues, and far less from the moral shock it had sustained, when it became necessary to provide against this fresh danger. It had however received reinforcements, horses, and a portion of the accoutrements of which it stood in such extreme need. Almeida could not hold out more than a few days longer, and Wellington having relaxed in prudence and diminished his strength by nearly one-half, Masséna considered the opportunity propitious for relieving the place and taking summary revenge upon the English. He therefore marched, on the 2d of May 1811, from Ciudad Rodrigo upon Almeida, with about 38,000 men, who were joined by a battery of artillery and some 1500 cavalry belonging to the Guards, commanded by Marshal Bessières. On the 3d of May he took up a position right opposite the English army. According to its custom, the latter was intrenched upon ground peculiarly favourable for defence, between two small rivers, the Dos Casas and the Turones. From thence it covered all the investment works, and extended from the forts of La Concepcion and of Alameda to Fuentes d'Oñoro, its front protected by the deep ravine of the Dos Casas, and its retreat secured by two bridges over the Turones and the Coa. For the first time since Busaco it was inferior to us in numbers, not counting more than 36,000 men, including its Spanish auxiliaries; but the strength of its position amply compensated for this disadvantage.

Wellington's left and centre being very difficult of access, from the depth of the Dos Casas ravine, Masséna resolved to attack him upon his right at Fuentes d'Oñoro, to seize, if possible, the bridge across the Coa which secured his retreat to Castelbone, and then to drive back the whole of his army into the corner from which there was no exit, formed by the Douro, the Coa, and the Agueda. In the afternoon of the 3d of May the Ferey division attacked the village of Fuentes d'Oñoro impetuously, carried the lower part and established themselves in it without much difficulty;

but on endeavouring to get possession of the upper portion, which was strongly occupied and covered by the Dos Casas, they were received by a terrific fire and driven back beyond the river. Before long they returned to the attack, supported this time by the Marchand division and a number of guns that played on the village, while Regnier appeared in force at Alameda in the hope of diverting the attention of the English to their left. But this second attack was not more successful than the first, and our troops, after showing themselves for a moment on the heights of Fuentes d'Oñoro, were driven down again at the point of the bayonet, forced to retreat across the stream, and to leave the streets of the village heaped up with their dead and dying.

Night suspended the combat. It had meanwhile become clear that the heights of Fuentes d'Oñoro—the key of the English positions—could not be carried except by a fearful struggle. But perhaps they could be turned. Next day, therefore, the 4th of May, Masséna made a general reconnaissance of the enemy's line, with a view to discover his vulnerable point. Beyond Fuentes d'Oñoro, towards Poso-Velho and Nave de Aver, the ground was flat and the Dos Casas dwindled to a mere streak of water; the ravine, so great an obstacle, disappeared, and our cavalry, far superior to the enemy's, could manœuvre and operate with effect. From that point Wellington's right could be turned, his communications with Sabugal interrupted, and his line of retreat on Castelbone menaced. Consequently, by a change of fronts, operated during the night of the 4th, Masséna moved the cavalry commanded by Montbrun, Loison's two divisions, and a portion of Drouet's and of Junot's corps, to Poso-Velho; whilst Regnier remained opposite Alameda in order to occupy the enemy by feigned attacks.

At early dawn on the 5th our united forces attacked Poso-Velho, which position was at first defended only by the Spanish auxiliaries under Don Julian Sanchez. Wellington, however, foreseeing Masséna's manœuvre, had sent them a reinforcement during the night, composed of a Portuguese corps, the Houston brigade, and General Cotton's cavalry; but the Marchand and Mermet divisions,

with the Maucune brigade, attacking them with impetuosity while Montbrun's cavalry charged furiously on their flanks, they broke beneath the shock, and were driven back across the Turone.

Behind these regiments, however, the Crawford division stood drawn up in battle array, and at once sheltered and rallied them. But Montbrun broke through and penetrated into two squares of English infantry, and his cavalry were in the midst of a splendid headlong onset, when masked batteries suddenly opened and stopped them short in full career, causing them most fearful loss. At this critical moment, one portion of the cavalry which belonged to our guards refused to charge, on the pretext that it had not received the order to do so from Bessières, its own special commander. Meanwhile the English army had lost the whole table-land of Poso-Velho, or in other words, nearly a league of ground on its right. But Wellington had reinforced Crawford by one division, besides the Ashworth brigade and a reserve of artillery; while, concentrating all the troops we had repulsed in the morning upon the same spot, and openly abandoning all intention of preserving his communications with Sabugal, he opposed a new front to us, resting at one end upon Fuentes d'Oñoro, and at the other upon the Turone and the Coa. This new line resisted our most furious onslaughts with unshaken steadiness, and Fuentes d'Oñoro again became the central point of the action. It was taken and retaken several times by both armies with extraordinary fierceness, but this sanguinary day ended without our having gained any greater advantage than on the previous one. We remained masters, it is true, of the lower part of the village, and of the plain on which the morning's battle had been fought, but this was a poor compensation for the fact that the English still continued to invest Almeida, and that consequently we had missed our aim.

Masséna wished at all hazards to recommence the battle on the morrow; but his ammunition was exhausted, and what was more unfortunate, his principal officers were all opposed to a renewal of the attack. Ammunition might

have been obtained from Ciudad Rodrigo, but neither Bessières, Drouet, nor Regnier would begin the struggle again; and meanwhile the enemy was employing every hour in fortifying himself and covering his position by abattis and intrenchments. During four whole days Masséna—unwilling to admit that he had been beaten—continued opposite the English army, front to front, or turning round its positions, as if to find out some point where he could attack it anew. At length, on the 10th of May, he moved away, broken-hearted. Before leaving he despatched an order to Brenier, the commandant at Almeida, to evacuate the place and blow up the fortifications, long since undermined. Brenier and his small garrison left the place in the night of the 10th of May, leaving a few men behind to set fire to the mines; then, creeping on under cover of the darkness and silence of the camp, which was sunk in sleep, he passed through the English lines with the utmost intrepidity and success, and joined the French army in the course of the following day.[1] Masséna soon afterwards returned to France: unpopular with the army, who attributed its sufferings to him; in disgrace with Napoleon, who never forgave him his failure, of which he himself was the sole cause; cried down by his companions in arms, envious of his superiority; carrying a tarnished fame into the solitude which was henceforth to be his lot, with the stinging remembrance of his unrequited services, and all the disappointment and bitterness of a heart irrecoverably wounded. His successor had been already appointed, in the person of the thoughtless and presumptuous Marmont.

A few days later it became known that Soult had on his side made an attempt to force Beresford to raise the siege of Badajoz, and had been even less successful than Masséna. Beresford had waited for him at Albuera, in positions that had been pointed out to him by Wellington[2] a month previously, as those which he should choose for defensive

[1] Report by Masséna to Berthier, May 7, 1811. Wellington to Liverpool, May 8, 1811. Napier, Peninsular War. General Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna.*

[2] In a letter to Beresford, April 16, 1811.

battle with the enemy. Soult, casting on this occasion all his customary pretences aside, entered into the engagement seriously and with extraordinary energy; and his defeat, in consequence, was all the more sanguinary. Far from having added to his renown, his calculation, double dealing, and artful diplomacy had only contributed to his trouble. His losses before Badajoz, with those of his lieutenant Victor at Cadiz, and above all at Chiclana, had so weakened the army of Andalusia that he had now to ask every one for assistance—Berthier, Joseph, and even Masséna, whom he had so treacherously abandoned.

Beresford's military arrangements at Albuera resembled those of Wellington as much as it was possible for the work of a pupil to resemble that of his master. The battle, which he accepted rather than offered, was a thoroughly defensive one, carried on with a caution that almost amounted to timidity. The brilliant tacticians of the Empire had no words wherewith to express their contempt for the stationary, hesitating, embarrassed system which the Anglo-Spanish army was compelled to adopt from the mixed character of its troops. Even Masséna, who was far more clear-sighted than others, could not avoid remarking, in his bulletin from Fuentes d'Oñoro, with a certain amount of secret spite, that his adversary 'had employed all the resources of fortification against an attack made by main force.' And the *Moniteur*, in articles which display Napoleon's own hand, delighted in sneering at Wellington's 'prudence.'

Sneers of this kind were as senseless as those of the Austrian generals in 1796, when they reproached the youthful Bonaparte with not fighting them according to rule. Wellington's slowness and prudence were as appropriate to the character of the war in Spain as Bonaparte's rapidity and audacity had been to that of the war in Italy. This new system of tactics was not only well suited to the small resources at the disposal of the English general, but was also based on a thorough acquaintance with the weak points in the Imperial method of warfare, and with both the defects and virtues of the French army such as Napoleon

had made it. This new army—more impetuous than solid, aiming above all else at show and effect, less solicitous about results than appearances, living only by expediency and rapine, creating an enemy to itself in every loaf of bread it ate, bold during success and insubordinate under reverses—was beginning to despise as so many worn-out prejudices the strong and patient virtues by which it had attained its renown. Rivalry had replaced emulation, ambition supplanted patriotism, and a mania for favours had even introduced court privileges into the army. How else, in an army formed by such a general as Napoleon, can that etiquette, worthy alone of the lower Empire, be explained, by which the Guards were forbidden to charge, no matter how great the peril, without an express order from their own special commanding officer, as though their position near the sovereign had conferred upon them a share in the sacred inviolability of his person?

Inflexible discipline, constant attention in securing subsistence for his soldiers, in paying all his expenses, in preserving his communications, in systematically acting upon the defensive, so as never to accept battle until he had collected all the advantages on his side—excessive circumspection in the formation of his plans, and indomitable obstinacy during action,—such were the means by which Wellington opposed us. They were no doubt far less brilliant than ours from an æsthetic point of view; not theatrically striking; offering no scientific combinations that could be quoted in a treatise upon strategy; but eminently efficacious. Wellington dazzled no one, but he beat us. He could afford to bear our contempt with philosophy, when he was successively defeating Junot, Soult, Ney, and Masséna; in other words, the generals who had contributed most to the success of the Empire.

CHAPTER XII

ALEXANDER AND POLAND—PREPARATIONS FOR THE WAR IN RUSSIA—NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN POWERS

(*December* 1810–*September* 1811)

THE recent serious events in the Peninsula did not at first create that sensation in Europe which they seemed calculated to produce. The real facts were but little known, owing to the compulsory silence of the press; they came to light only by degrees, and Napoleon was consequently enabled to use greater intimidation than ever. England alone seems to have thoroughly understood the importance of the long and terrible duel which had been fought out in Portugal. It soon, however, became evident that the lesson had not been lost on another power, the only one throughout the whole extent of the subdued Continent that now dared to stand up against Napoleon. Russia, long the most accommodating amongst his allies, but now wearied by his tyrannical exactions, rose up against him as a last champion of the rights of Europe. Her attitude was the more disquieting from the fact that she avoided with the utmost care all provocation or bravado, though firmly determined at the same time to maintain her rights. 'All eyes are fixed upon the two Empires,' wrote Joseph de Maistre from St. Petersburg so early as the month of February 1811.[1] The antagonism between the two Emperors was no longer anywhere a secret. Their quarrels, long hidden in the discreet recesses of diplomatic offices, became public to the world when Napoleon, without the shadow of a pretext, seized the states of the duke of Oldenburg, totally regard-

[1] *Correspondance Diplomatique*, published by Albert Blanc.

less of his family relationship to Alexander. That mad act, however, notwithstanding all that has been said on the subject, was not the determining cause of Alexander's coolness. Apart from his previous grievances, the usurpations which had accompanied or preceded the annexation of Oldenburg were more than enough to justify a rupture. But in this last violation of the law of nations there was a sort of personal affront well calculated to give greater weight to Alexander's complaints, not so much from a legal point of view as from that of public opinion, always of eminent importance in a matter of the kind.

Henceforward we behold him venturing to assume an energetic and decided attitude. His first answer to the annexation of Oldenburg was an ukase, issued under date of December 31, 1810, in which he distinctly detached himself from Napoleon's commercial system, restored the freedom of his tariffs, and, without admitting English merchandise more freely than before, excluded certain of our manufactures, just as we had already excluded certain products of Russia. That he had a strict right to act in this manner admits of no doubt, nor can it be asserted that he was in any way bound by those arbitrary and changeable decrees which constituted the continental system—decrees, moreover, that had been issued without his consent, were impracticable in Russia, and obeyed by Napoleon himself only when it suited his own convenience. The testimony of their author himself might be quoted on this point, for, while making it criminal on Alexander's part to infringe the decrees by his ukase, Napoleon admitted in formal terms that after all 'he had been at liberty to adopt this measure, but for something (a *je ne sais quoi*) which it implied hostile to France and favourable to England.'[1] But what availed it to possess strict right, when such right was in opposition to his imperious will? And no matter how trifling that something, that '*je ne sais quoi*,' might be, of which Napoleon spoke, was it not sufficient ground in his eyes for a war, even for a war with Russia?

Alexander, taking his formidable antagonist's character

[1] Napoleon to the king of Wurtemberg, April 2, 1811.

into account, henceforward with the utmost foresight considered such a war inevitable, and at once made every effort to prepare for it. Nor did he any longer give himself the needless and humiliating trouble of concealing his armaments. But while ordering new levies, and recalling troops from Finland and from the Danubian Provinces to the frontiers of Poland, and constructing defensive works on the Dnieper and the Dwina, he endeavoured to impart to them the appearance of being altogether of a defensive character. Although his right to declare war had become indisputable ever since Napoleon's latest outrages against the public law of Europe, the Emperor Alexander could not view so extreme a measure, at all times full of peril, without the keenest and most painful perplexity. Was he to maintain this expectant attitude to the last, and wait until his enemy should come to seek him on Russian territory, thus making his wrongs more palpable? or would it not be better to advance upon him before he had finished his preparations, and defeat his plans by one of those sudden attacks which are often the best method of defence?

The temptation to Alexander must have been strong, for it is undeniable that though he had begun his armaments after ours, he was ready before Napoleon. The rumour of the imminent opening of a campaign by the Russians was circulated in Poland and St. Petersburg during the whole winter of 1811. One of our diplomatists, Bignon, then on the mission at Warsaw, being apprised of this by Prince Poniatowski, mentioned it in one of his despatches, and Alexander himself made an indirect allusion to the report, when in the following month of May he exclaimed, during a conversation with our ambassador, 'If I had wished to make an attack, who could have prevented me? *I have been ready for the last two months!*'[1] Did the intention attributed to him, and so natural in his position, exist really as a deliberate project, or was it merely an empty and passing desire? For a very long time past it has not been possible to arrive at anything more than conjecture on the point, but we are now enabled to clear up the question.

[1] Lauriston's despatch, June 1, 1811.

Alexander had never altogether given up his old dream of reconciling Poland with Russia. At this period, as at the beginning of his reign, he would willingly have held out his hand to the Poles, provided their emancipation were effected to the advantage of Russia without sundering the bonds which united them to that empire; but nothing would induce him to permit it to be achieved by any foreign influence. Having been compelled, by the popularity which Napoleon had acquired in Poland through his creation of the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw, to postpone his youthful Utopia indefinitely, he was forcibly compelled to take it up again, from the moment that the Grand-Duchy had been strengthened and increased by the accession of a portion of Galicia, and above all when he beheld the threatening contingency of a new war rising before him. In so unequal a struggle he wished to have Poland as his ally at any price, and was ready to make every sacrifice in order to detach it from Napoleon.

That the liberation of Poland was a terrible weapon against Russia, and that Napoleon was resolved to make use of that weapon at some future day, Alexander could not for an instant doubt, after his fruitless efforts to obtain some promise from the Emperor binding himself never to restore that kingdom. There was but one method by which Alexander could deprive Napoleon of the extraordinary power he had acquired over the Poles—namely, by himself making advances to them imploring them to forget all rancour and past mistrust, and offering them more than Napoleon could give them. Alexander in no wise shrank from the natural consequences of his great resolve. From the time that Napoleon had rejected his draft of a convention relative to Poland, the Czar had resumed his *pourparlers* of former days with Prince Adam Czartoryski, the friend and confidant of his youth. He clearly pointed out to him the probability of some possible arrangement with Poland, and the advantages which that unfortunate country might derive from it; but the Prince did not conceal from the Czar the difficulties attending such a project, the attachment of his fellow-countrymen to France, the hopes they rested

upon her, and the obstacles which Napoleon would not fail to arouse against him.

On the 25th of December 1810, under the evident impression of the news just arrived from France, Alexander's proposals suddenly emerged from their vague state, and acquired all the form and precision desirable. 'It seems to me,' he wrote to Czartoryski, 'that this is the moment to prove to the Poles that Russia is not their enemy, but, rather their natural and true friend; that, although they have been made to look upon Russia as the only existing opponent to the restoration of Poland, it is not improbable, on the contrary, that she will be the one to realise it. My saying this may perhaps astonish you, but, I repeat it, circumstances appear to me favourable for my carrying out an idea which formerly was my favourite one, and which I have twice been obliged to postpone from the force of circumstances, but which has none the less remained in the recesses of my mind.'[1] And he instantly asks the Prince a series of questions of which the two following are a summary. 'Have you grounds for believing that the inhabitants of Warsaw would grasp with avidity at any certainty (not probability, but *certainty*) of their regeneration? Would they seize it, no matter whence it came to them, and would they join the power which would sincerely espouse their interests?' The answer of such a patriot as Czartoryski could not be uncertain. 'Yes!' he wrote to the Emperor; 'the certainty of Poland's regeneration would be accepted with eagerness and gratitude, no matter whence it came, *provided that such certainty had a real existence.*'

But, as he said, therein lay the whole difficulty. No matter how Napoleon might have wronged the Poles, he had contrived to persuade them that he wished to liberate them, and it was in him alone that they placed their confidence. Moreover, he had 20,000 Poles in Spain, who were so many hostages in his hands. Nevertheless the Prince thought it possible to rally round him the majority of the Polish nation, if three things were promised to him —the constitution of the 3d of May 1791; the union of

[1] Alexander to Prince Czartoryski, December 25, 1810.

the whole of Poland under one sceptre; and, lastly, the commercial advantages which were indispensable to her. But it would be necessary to act without half measures or reservations, in a grand and noble manner, so as to impress the imagination of the public, and even then success appeared to him difficult. 'It is too good to be true!' he exclaimed sadly at the end of his letter.[1]

This time, however, the Emperor Alexander tore away every veil, and took a decided step. Unity of Poland, liberal constitution, everything in fine, he promised to Czartoryski; but he made it a condition *sine quâ non* that Poland should form a kingdom united to Russia, of which the Emperor should henceforward style himself Emperor and King, and that the leading Poles should make a formal engagement with him to that effect. If these two conditions were accepted he would proclaim the restoration of Poland and instantly attack Napoleon, notwithstanding his repugnance to be the aggressor. This he believed that he could do with great chance of success. He had an army of 106,000 men perfectly ready to enter on a campaign. Another army of 134,000 men would march in support of the first. He calculated on the co-operation of 50,000 more from the Poles, and the same number from Prussia. These forces alone formed a mass of 300,000 men, to which, according to his calculation, Napoleon had then but a very small army to oppose, especially if, as there was reason to expect, Austria were induced to join by the offer of the Danubian Principalities in exchange for the portion of Galicia which still remained to her.[2]

These offers were sincere, as the Emperor Alexander afterwards fully proved by resuming the realisation of his liberal programme at a period when circumstances in nowise obliged him to do it. But Prince Czartoryski, despite his zeal and his patriotism, could not insure him the guarantees demanded. The projects of founding a kingdom of Poland, and of attacking Napoleon, were in consequence abandoned, and Alexander was forced to revert to his defensive system.[3]

[1] Czartoryski to Alexander, January 30, 1811.
[2] Alexander to Czartoryski, January 31, 1811.
[3] The project of founding a Grand-Duchy of Lithuania, of which

In the interests of Russia this return to a prudent policy was in all probability not to be regretted. Had Alexander under the most favourable circumstances obtained even a preliminary success, he could not have followed it up farther. The rapidity with which Napoleon concentrated his armies is well known. The only difference therefore would have been, that, instead of giving battle on the Vistula, he would have accepted it on the Oder, the Elbe, or the Weser; and then this new coalition would have expired in a day, like all those which had preceded it, though with far more disastrous consequences to the European cause. By not turning to account the advantages which his vast territory and rigorous climate afforded her against so formidable an enemy as Napoleon, Russia would voluntarily deprive herself of her best chances of conquering him. But in January 1811 the Emperor Alexander was not yet convinced of this truism, and it was Masséna's campaign in Portugal which first made him understand it.

The plan which he definitively adopted was partially the work of Count Armfeldt, a Swede by birth, who, after having held high appointments in his own country, had taken refuge in Russia on Bernadotte's elevation to the rank of Crown Prince. Having been received with distinction at St. Petersburg, and appointed Governor of Finland by Alexander, von Armfeldt showed his gratitude by addressing various military and political notes to him, which seem to have had a marked influence on the Emperor's deliberations. His plans were supported and verified by eminent personages, remarkable in different ways, such as Barclay de Tolly, Serra Capriola, and Admiral Mordwinoff.

To maintain his grievances against Napoleon, without affording him any loophole for attack by too open an opposition; to arouse secret enemies against him in every direction, while avoiding every act that might seem compromising; to resist him by inaction; to force him to attack

Count Oginski speaks in his Memoirs, vol. iii., was devised only on the failure of the one I have just mentioned, and was abandoned for the same reasons.

by always threatening without ever striking him; then, when war was declared, to retire before him, destroying everything on his road, and creating a desert around his army; to entice him on into the depths of Russia, by refusing any general action unless certain to carry it, being content to act on his communications until he should be worn out and exhausted, by the method with which Wellington had succeeded so well—such was the programme, so far as we are allowed to infer from very incomplete information, which Armfeldt and his friends drew up on this occasion. Most probably they did not stand alone in recommending it, for such ideas were then in the air, and some trace of them is to be found everywhere. Diplomatic documents and the works of public writers equally testify to their existence. At all events this was the system adopted by Alexander. The plan was known from July 1811, and Alquier, our Minister at Stockholm, reported its leading points to Napoleon, but the warning proved as useless as so many others which he received at the same period.

This programme once fixed upon, Alexander, no matter who was its author, had the merit of holding to it with unvarying perseverance, and of setting it in motion with marvellous skill. War between these two powerful empires was henceforth certain, as was equally well known on both sides. Napoleon, though he had desired it, now regarded it with an apprehension to which he had hitherto been a stranger; but as neither party would make the concessions necessary for its prevention, it every day became more inevitable. It must be admitted, however, that, notwithstanding the inferiority of his situation, Alexander up to the last maintained the advantage over his adversary in frankness, moderation, and dignity, as he always had done in strict right; and during the long series of reciprocal recriminations which lasted through the whole of 1811, Alexander's words generally corresponded with his actions.

From the first day that Caulaincourt questioned him as to his armaments he acknowledged them, observing withal to the ambassador that they were only in answer to those of Napoleon; a fact which was strictly true. At the same

time Napoleon obstinately denied his, with a dissimulation as petty as it was useless. The whole of Europe knew and complained of his sending arms, ammunition, and soldiers to Hamburg, to Dantzig, and the Duchy of Warsaw; his convoys encumbered the roads and canals, yet he continued to deny them, or, when forced to admit them, had explanations ready-made for everything. At one time these troops were intended to watch Prussia, at another to repel a projected landing of the English. He had such a habit of lying, or rather such a predilection for it, always and everywhere, that he persisted in it even when certain that the lie would not be believed. He could hardly flatter himself, after all that had occurred, that he would be able to invade Russia in the noiseless manner in which he had invaded Spain—professing alliance and friendship at the moment that his troops were seizing all the strong places of the kingdom. However, his proceedings towards Alexander seem exactly traced on those he had employed towards Charles IV.

The more actively his preparations were urged forward, the more affectionate his protestations became. 'He wishes to do nothing which may be disagreeable to the Emperor Alexander,' he writes on February the 17th, 1811. 'He has done all that depended on him by offering Erfurt as an indemnity to the prince of Oldenburg. *The terms of the Senatus-Consultum are precise!*' Napoleon's goodwill enchained by the terms of his Senatus-Consultum! Was not this a discovery full of genius? 'You will desire the duke of Vicenza,' he continued, 'to declare to the Emperor that I persevere in the alliance; that I see no possible circumstance in which I should make war on Russia, except in the single case of Russia taking part with England; *that I have no alliance with any power.*'[1] Nevertheless, on the very same day and hour, he caused overtures to be made to Turkey,[1] who without delay communicated them to the whole of Europe; and a few days later, on February the 25th, he made them to Austria, whose discretion was only measured by her interest. Count Otto was instructed

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, February 17, 1811.

to tell Metternich that 'France beheld with regret the increase of territory which Russia had acquired by the occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia, but having consented to that occupation through enmity to Austria at the period of the interview at Erfurt, she could no longer oppose it without having recourse to war. Those provinces were only of secondary interest to France, but of primary importance to Austria. How far then would Austria be disposed to go, and what would she be capable of doing in order *to prevent their annexation?* Would her displeasure go so far as to make her entertain the idea of war with Russia?'[1]

Such simplicity is astounding in the midst of so much trickery. It was certainly an exaggeration of candour to imagine that Austria could be frightened by an increase of territory on the part of Russia, when that increase was denounced to her by the man who in the space of a few years had taken possession of the half of Europe, and had just despoiled Austria herself of her finest provinces. Could it be supposed that such overtures would remain a secret? Would it not be silly to believe that a power which had been struck with such merciless rigour could all at once give up its traditions, interests, ill-will, and hopes, because the Emperor Francis had been reduced to the humiliation of giving his own daughter to his enemy for the purpose of disarming him; because, according to an expression of Louis XVIII. in a letter to the Comte d'Avray, he had made himself 'a merchant of human kind'? A diplomacy that reposed on a foundation of such pitiable illusions, and ventured on such rash proceedings, was indeed a wretched one; and how could any one in Paris forget that Metternich's most intimate friend at Vienna was Count Razumowski, former Russian Ambassador to the court of Austria?

Alexander was informed day by day of our diplomatic proceedings, not only by his agents, but, as it was easy to foresee, by the foreign courts themselves, eminently interested in making him aware of the intrigues of the common enemy. He was no less cognisant of our military

[1] The same, February 25, 1811.

preparations and of the movements of our troops, through the medium of his aide-de-camp Czernitcheff, a brilliant diplomatist and soldier, who was a great favourite in the *salons* of Paris. Apparently occupied solely with pleasure and success in society, Czernitcheff had contrived, by secret information, to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the operations of our Ministry of War. After such communications, what effect could the protestations of friendship, which Napoleon persisted in lavishing upon him, produce on Alexander's mind?

Napoleon determined to recall Caulaincourt, whom he accused of having become more Russian than French, under the influence of Alexander's civilities; and sent Lauriston in his place, who soon incurred the same reproach for having shown equal sincerity. On this occasion he wrote to Alexander, saying that 'he had looked around him for the man who he thought would be most agreeable to his Majesty, and most fit to maintain peace and the alliance; but,' added he in a melancholy tone, 'I cannot deceive myself, *your Majesty no longer entertains any friendship for me!*'[1] A long list then follows of all that he had done for Alexander; how he had allowed him to take Finland and the Danubian Provinces from ancient allies of France; how he might have roused Poland, but had abstained from doing so; in short, if he were to be believed, Russia had appropriated to herself all the advantages of the alliance.

He forgot that in the same space of time he had taken possession of Spain, Tuscany, the Roman States, Illyria, the Tyrol, Holland, a portion of Hanover, the Hanseatic Towns, Oldenburg, and the Valais,—acquisitions which doubtless might be balanced against Finland and Moldo-Wallachia! well knowing that, no matter how he might try to hide his armaments, some rumours about them must transpire, he made up his mind to acknowledge them partially in a note to Prince Kourakine, though assuring him at the same time that we were scandalously calumniated, 'that malicious persons took pleasure in exaggerating the smallest circumstances, that the least movement could not

[1] Napoleon to Alexander, February 28, 1811.

be made without its being misrepresented, that an approaching great move on the part of the English in the Baltic had alone induced him to increase the garrison at Dantzig; that, in short, the best way to defeat such malevolence was by henceforward reciprocally informing each other of whatever might be capable of giving rise to wrong interpretations.'[1]

These explanations, remarkable for their fair and cordial frankness, were transmitted from Napoleon to Alexander at the very moment when he was personally arranging the organisation of his *grande armée* to the minutest details, down even to the number of *dark lanterns* which should be carried by every waggon belonging to a park of artillery![2] He sent Davout as many as three despatches in a single day to stimulate his zeal. Notwithstanding, he would not for one moment admit the possibility of Russia's intending to attack him. Above all, he did not wish any one to believe that power could have such excessive audacity. According to him she was much too occupied with the Turks to dream of it. What the Poles wrote upon that subject '*was nothing but nonsense.*'[3] Sure of Davout's discretion, he ordered him to advise Rapp to *hold his tongue*, and to impress on every one that all his preparations were directed against the English.

Whilst thus denying a war which he at once desired and feared, and to which he was dragged on as if by some fascination, he every day took another step towards his fall; sometimes with a secret desire to turn back, but without being able to withdraw himself from the fatal influence of his pride and of his past faults. One is justified in believing that, on the eve of playing this formidable part, he had more than one moment of anxiety, and perhaps therefore he did not always act with bad faith when proposing to Alexander a renewal of their former friendship. But there was only one act which could effect their reconciliation, and that was simply the complete restitution of the Duchy of Oldenburg; such a retractation, however, was so repug-

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, March 19, 1811.
[2] Napoleon to Clarke, March 19, 1811.
[3] Napoleon to Davout, March 24, 1811.

nant to all his instincts, it was so incompatible with the idea which he wished to give of himself, with the part which he had arrogated to himself in the world, that it constituted nothing short of a real moral impossibility.

Napoleon would have belied all his past career, have abandoned all his pretensions, old and new, and renounced his whole system of domination, had he thus voluntarily acted in direct contradiction to all his previous life. Moreover, he never had been master of his own passions, and was now no longer master of his system. He was the slave of what he called his destiny, or in other words, of that character, consisting of omnipotence and infallibility, which he had usurped at so early a period of his career. If he allowed the slightest blow to be struck at it, the entire framework would collapse. There was some cause, therefore, for his saying that he could not undo what had been done, even though he sometimes might desire it. But this impossibility of retreat signified war, for Alexander was equally determined to maintain his protest, and to be no longer either an assistant or an accomplice of the oppressor of the Continent. Although his system was purely defensive, the result of his passive but inflexible resistance was none the less inevitable. While the one never retreated and the other was always advancing, it was utterly impossible that a collision should not take place within a given time.

These considerations explain how a war, which apparently could have been so easily prevented, was nevertheless prepared, resolved upon, and announced during a long period, slowly and coolly, without the slightest animosity on either side, and even amidst protestations of the most affectionate and pacific description. The question this time was one of the massacre of a million of men, and Napoleon by one word might have averted the calamity. But it was not in the nature of this monster of power and of pride, such as he had been made by the abject submission of nations, to pronounce the one word which was essential for the purpose; and those who had raised the idol could not complain of having to furnish him with vic-

tims. Hence, while incessantly repeating 'I do not wish for war,' he beheld war, as it were, marching forward in full animation before his view, and was not able to resist the attraction which it exercised over him. The vision never again left his mind. '*War will take place*,' he wrote to the king of Würtemberg; '*it will take place in spite of me, in spite of the Emperor Alexander, in spite of the interests both of France and of Russia.* I have seen the same thing very often, and it is my experience of the past which reveals the future to me. It is all like a scene in an opera, of which the English control the machinery!'[1]

A few days afterwards he allowed the same impression to appear in a letter to the emperor of Russia, when for the first time acknowledging to him one portion of his preparations. 'I have received information from Bucharest,' he wrote, 'that five Russian divisions have quitted Moldavia and Wallachia for Poland. . . . I also have been obliged to attend to my affairs and to place myself in readiness. The reaction caused by my preparations will induce your Majesty to increase yours; and that, being reported here, will oblige me to make fresh levies, and *all this for pure phantoms!* . . . For myself, I shall continue to be the personal friend of your Majesty, even when the fatality which is dragging Europe onwards shall one day place arms in the hands of both nations.'[2]

These characteristic words describe the mental and moral state of Napoleon alone, and not that of his adversaries. It was he, in fact, and not Europe, who was drawn on by the fatality to which he alludes; for while maintaining his rights, with no wish to be the aggressor even in support of a good cause, Alexander was strictly following the line of duty and honour, which is never subjected to the fluctuations of fatalism. Hence he was in nowise responsible for the consequences, however disastrous they might be either to himself or to France.

A firm and dignified protest against the annexation of Oldenburg, on the part of the Russian Cabinet, apprised

[1] Napoleon to the king of Würtemberg, April 2, 1811.
[2] Napoleon to the Emperor Alexander, April 8, 1811.

the European governments so early as the month of March of the conflict which had broken out between the two emperors. They could do no more than guess its different phases, but they knew at least that henceforward there was an open quarrel between them, and they awaited its issue with an anxiety that was not unmixed with hope. Although in secret necessarily favourable to a cause so much their own, they were well aware that any open indication of such sentiments would expose them to immediate and certain ruin. The first essential point they had to look to, so as to be able to take advantage of the contingencies they foresaw, was to preserve their existence. In the state of weakness to which their defeats had reduced them, they could neither stop the advance of Napoleon's armies for one single instant, nor afford any useful aid, at least at present, to Russia. It was necessary, therefore, to gain time, to dissimulate and yield until a moment should occur when they could with advantage turn round on the tyrant. Their submission and their eagerness were direct consequences of the fear with which he inspired them. All this happened naturally, as a matter of course, and was understood without being discussed; it surprised no one, and no one was offended by it. Every government of that day thoroughly understood the forcible distinction which had to be drawn between their real sentiments and their official attitude, and he who had taught them this system at the cannon's mouth, at a later day alone persisted in calling that conduct ungrateful and treacherous which was the natural result of his own tyranny.

In the month of April 1811, Napoleon, perceiving that Champagny had grown taciturn and reserved, a fact which in his eyes implied secret disapprobation, deprived him of the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, and appointed Maret, Duc de Bassano, Secretary of State in his stead. A faithful and devoted interpreter of his master's thoughts, and long accustomed to correct their form and to give them that style which they did not naturally possess, Maret was only too well inclined to sympathise with all the passions and ideas of the Emperor. He entertained an unbounded

admiration for him, and worshipped his sense of infallibility, although not a little conceited as to his own merits. A minister of this kind was not suited to restore to our diplomacy the prestige which it lost when Talleyrand retired from it; indeed he merely reflected with greater emphasis the violent and incoherent language of the master under whose inspirations he acted. In fact, it may safely be asserted that Maret's appointment extinguished all hope of any intermediate agent between Napoleon and those who wished to treat with him. Such entire absence of moderation or palliation was not calculated to facilitate any compromise. At that precise moment, however, when diplomatic persuasion was altogether supplanted by irresistible force, the drawbacks of such a method were but imperfectly noticed, and full light was not thrown upon them until the time came when that force itself was wavering.

It was Maret, therefore, who received the answer of the Austrian Cabinet to the singular question which Champagny had addressed to it in the name of the Emperor. Since his marriage with Marie-Louise no longer inspired the court of Vienna with the same terror or hatred that it once did, though admiring neither Napoleon nor his system, they felt protected against him by the bonds which united the two sovereigns, and strong enough to make their own conditions; and while wishing to compromise themselves as little as possible, were anxious to hold themselves in readiness to take advantage either of any victory that might be gained by us, or, on the other hand, of our defeat. To attain this result, a neutral, conciliatory, colourless policy, which should give hopes to all parties without entering into engagements with any, was the safest and at the same time the wisest attitude for Austria to adopt. Metternich excelled precisely in such scientific temporising, which required a far greater use of theories than of words or actions. In this respect he was ably seconded by the Emperor Francis, who played the part towards Napoleon of the good father of a family, retired from public affairs, pretending to occupy himself no longer with anything but his own pleasures, and speaking of him-

self as a disappointed man, who was determined to meddle no further in politics. To the question addressed to him by Napoleon on the subject of Moldo-Wallachia, Metternich answered that Austria without doubt possessed the greatest interest in the Danubian Provinces, and that the subject formed a most serious grievance on her part against Russia, but that she could not look upon it as an immediate cause for war, considering the state of exhaustion to which the last campaign had reduced her. From this reply it was clear that Austria would not resist a threatening injunction from Napoleon, but that she would follow him unwillingly, making him pay dearly for her services, and being firmly determined to abandon him on the first occasion.[1]

The situation of Prussia was quite different. That power was so fatally condemned to conspire against us by the intolerable insults to which we had subjected her ever since Tilsit, and would derive so much benefit from our reverses, that she found it impossible not to suppose that Napoleon's first act, before beginning the campaign against Russia, would be to consummate her ruin. Such a prospect naturally terrified Prussia. Hence, on the first rumour of a rupture, she rushed to the front and eagerly offered her services, before any one had even thought of asking them. Although wellnigh annihilated by the blows of Napoleon, though her territory was still partially occupied by our troops and her people crushed by taxes and war contributions, Prussia, notwithstanding, had already, in a manner unknown to us, though under our very eyes, renewed herself by sheer dint of energy, order, labour, economy, and patient obstinacy, but above all, by a perfect and constant union between the nation and its Government. There, by good fortune as rare as it was marvellous, all, from the lowest subject up to the sovereign, united in aiming at the one end, without orders and without watchword. Universal harmony of the will had achieved this result, and discipline of the kind had never before been seen in the world. Disobedience even was turned to account; the king, for

[1] Archives of Foreign Affairs. Austria, 270; Otto, April 10, 1811.

instance, having no more devoted servant than Schill the rebel. Neither *coteries* nor parties any longer existed there; every one was possessed by one thought alone—the liberation of the country.

The secret societies gave a further support to the Government, by performing a task which it could not itself have undertaken, that of fostering zeal and acting as propagandists of patriotism. The efforts of Stein and Scharnhorst had not been wasted. Since the decrees of Memel, published in October 1807, a complete political and social revolution had taken place in Prussia, without Europe having heard it so much as mentioned; a revolution without speeches, tumults, or scaffolds, but a deep and lasting revolution; one which had infused fresh youth and vigour into Frederic's old monarchy. The new rights granted to the citizens and peasants had released them from all feudal subjection, had raised them in considerable numbers into territorial proprietors, and had called them to take a share in local influences and in the management of their own interests. Schools and centres of teaching had been multiplied, and every feeling which contributes to form the true citizen and patriot had been roused in them. Despite the low state of the finances, public instruction had been reorganised on the elaborate though expensive plans of William von Humboldt. The University of Berlin had just been founded, and already counted, amongst its professors, men who were an honour to their age, such as Fichte, Savigny, Wolf, Schleiermacher, Hufeland, and Klaproth. The scientific and civilian mind of the nation thus remained the master and ruler of its military spirit. The army, reduced to 42,000 men—the number fixed by the treaty of September 8, 1808—in reality contained 150,000, owing to the ingenious mechanism by which the small quantity of the levies was atoned for by their multiplicity, the regimental *cadres* being equal to 200,000 men.

But notwithstanding the marvels which Prussia had achieved by an activity thus concealed with such infinite skill, she was none the less at Napoleon's mercy. Well knowing her enemy's keen penetration, she supposed him

to be far more familiar with her hostile intentions than he really was, and dreading the worst from him at so critical a moment, while restrained by no inopportune dignity or useless frankness, she offered her support to him with all the impetuosity of repentance and fear. Thus in the beginning of April 1811, King Frederic William made overtures to our ambassador Saint-Marsan for an eventual treaty of alliance between France and Prussia. Shortly afterwards, being encouraged by insinuations from Napoleon, who wished to know how far they were disposed to go at Berlin, the king himself drew up the draft of a treaty, which Krusemarck, his minister, was to transmit to the Emperor. According to this draft, Napoleon was to undertake to guarantee the integrity of her actual possessions to Prussia, the king on his part promising in return to furnish him with a corps of auxiliaries in the event of 'France finding herself engaged in war either in Germany, *or on the frontiers of Prussia*.'[1]

This circumlocution, which was necessary in order to designate Russia, showed the inconvenience of signing such a treaty too long beforehand. But the offer of a corps of auxiliaries was taking Napoleon on his weak side, for he was asking every one for soldiers and sailors, even his very enemies, and he pushed his ardour for enrolments to a complete mania. Not only had he Poles, Germans, Italians, Dutch, Swiss, Illyrians, and Dalmatians in his armies, but even Spaniards and Portuguese. His genius was of itself to supply the absence of all patriotic stimulus amongst this international gathering, and even when he could not under any circumstance calculate upon the co-operation of so strange a medley, he regarded them as so many hostages for the fidelity of their sovereigns. The king at the same time wrote to the emperor of Russia, informing him that, not being able to remain neutral, he was about to ally himself with France.[2] Alexander, however, gave but slight heed to the announcement, being perfectly certain that Prussia would return to him when he

[1] Letter of the king of Prussia to Krusemarck, May 14, 1811.
[2] Frederic William to Alexander, May 16, 1811.

obtained success. Napoleon, on the other hand, aware of what he might henceforth expect from Prussian civility, observed an enigmatical and deep silence on the proposal of alliance, thereby subjecting the patient virtues of the Berlin Cabinet to a severe trial. What designs did this reserve conceal? Did it not announce that the destruction of Prussia was resolved upon by Napoleon? Was it prudent, on the other hand, to turn back to Russia before the rupture became certain? Would not the latter still feel sore at so recent a defection?

The perplexity of the Prussian statesmen soon reached its climax, from the uncertainty in which they were kept by Napoleon's studied silence. They freed themselves from it by a resolution, apparently most hazardous, but in reality far cleverer, and above all far more honourable, than the obsequiousness they had at first shown him. They openly commenced fortifying the few strong places still left to them, and announced their intention of arming, alleging in excuse for such measures the very motive which Napoleon had given to Russia, namely, the necessity of placing Prussia in a state of defence against the pretended landing of the English. But this was just one of those lies, the monopoly of which he reserved to himself, and he took the joke very ill. '*They might have tried to deceive Russia*,' he wrote to Saint-Marsan, '*by saying that they were sending troops against the English, but they know full well that the English will not land.!*' Subterfuges were no longer in season. Seeing that his country was compromised with Russia, without having gained the protection of France, Hardenberg threw off the mask, and boldly declared to our ambassador 'that it would be better to die sword in hand than to fall dishonourably; and that it was for France to choose between a faithful ally and a struggle of the most desperate character.'[1] Krusemarck had orders to make a similar statement to Maret, and to add that Prussia could at once place 100,000 men under arms. This bold and skilful step at first exasperated Napoleon. In the first moment of anger he despatched all the necessary orders to Davout for crushing

[1] Hardenberg to Krusemarck, August 30, 1811.

Prussia, if she did not instantly cease her preparations, but as he was at the same time to intimate that the treaty of alliance would be the reward of disarmament,[1] he found little difficulty in obtaining satisfaction on that point. Under these new conditions, however, the position of each side had singularly changed, and from having wished to abuse his advantage over Prussia, one might almost say that instead of imposing the treaty Napoleon now had to accept it.[2]

Russia made no effort to deprive us of alliances, the unsteadiness of which was no secret to her. St. Petersburg, Vienna, and Berlin were too intimately united by close identity of interests to require written engagements or reciprocal apologies. They were certain to understand each other without explanations, and to find themselves reunited whenever the decisive hour should arrive. This was the case even in small kingdoms, such as Saxony, which up to a certain point were our natural allies. They were still obedient, it is true, but they too held themselves in readiness to take advantage of contingencies.[3] From the moment that Alexander adopted the tactics of retiring before our army with a view to draw it on into the depths of Russia, had he asked Prussia or Austria to declare themselves openly for him, the only result would have been the instant annihilation of forces which it was far more politic to preserve in their integrity for a later period. Turkey and Sweden were two powers with which it was important for him to be allied, because they might either cover or menace the two flanks of his immense empire. He felt certain, whenever he wished it, of obtaining at least the neutrality of Turkey by making peace with her. But, thanks to the obliging communications liberally furnished by the English, the authorities at Constantinople were perfectly familiar

[1] Maret to Saint-Marsan, September 13, 1811.

[2] Saint-Marsan's despatches of the months of August and September are especially significant (*Arch. des Affaires étrangères: Prusse*, 213). See likewise on these negotiations, Bignon, vol. x.; Schoel, *Histoire abrégée des traités*, vol. x., and *les Mémoires tirés des papiers d'un homme d'État*, vol. xi.

[3] See the Memoirs of the Comte de Senfft, then chief minister of the king of Saxony.

with all the perfidy which Napoleon had employed against the Porte in recompense for its long fidelity; his advances were, consequently, very badly received there, and they almost openly scoffed at his ambassador, Latour-Maubourg. As to Sweden, which like Turkey had been one of our oldest allies, the Russians were certain of detaching her from us, since they were assisted by a most powerful agent, no less a personage than Napoleon himself.

Since Bernadotte's refusal to join in enforcing the continental blockade against neutrals, our relations with Sweden had become more and more unpleasant, a fact that in itself led to the beginning of an identity of interests between that country and Russia, which stood exactly in the same position. Bernadotte, like Alexander, would not consent utterly to ruin his kingdom for an insane idea, and facts already furnished them both with striking reasons in vindication of their resistance.

A most serious industrial and commercial crisis had just taken place in France (March 1811), and no one could entertain the slightest doubt that it had been caused by the continental system. The sufferings which France had to endure, in spite of the advantages of her privileged situation, were proof sufficient of what other countries must have experienced which did not possess her agricultural riches, her industrial monopoly, the fraudulent profits she derived from the licences, or the spoils of vanquished nations. In such a state of things, the prohibition against neutrals was literally equivalent to condemning Sweden to starvation. Napoleon none the less persisted in trying to impose this impracticable law upon her, maintaining with the utmost imperturbability 'that there were no neutrals, for all the neutrals were English.' And when the testimony of an American minister, certifying the nationality of the vessels belonging to his own country, was quoted against this assertion, Napoleon unhesitatingly answered, '*There are no American ships. If the American Minister states the contrary, he does not know what he is saying.*'[1]

So senseless a course was certain to throw Sweden sooner

[1] Napoleon to Maret, July 15, 1811.

or later into the arms of Russia. Her sympathies, however, were still with France. She had resisted the overtures made to her by Alexander, who had offered her Norway in December 1810, and nothing would have been easier than to have won her back to our side. Napoleon, too, notwithstanding his extraordinary infatuation, was often tempted to overcome his personal repugnance to Bernadotte, in order to attach him definitively to his cause. In the month of March 1811 he made an effort at reconciliation by condescending, despite his previous refusals, to write to him directly; and Bernadotte was keenly sensible of this advance, for he had felt deeply grieved at finding himself drawn into a quarrel with the country of his birth. Napoleon did not consent, however, any more than before, to let him take Norway, which belonged to our ally the king of Denmark, and which Bernadotte was eagerly longing for, that he might have something to offer the Swedes as a gift on his arrival amongst them; but he formally engaged to help them to reconquer Finland in the event of a war with Russia.[1]

In consequence of this communication our relations with Sweden had become nearly cordial, when an unforeseen event, the almost inevitable result of the continental system, occurred, which rendered them more difficult than ever. Two French privateers having seized some Swedish vessels on pretext of their having infringed the regulations of the blockade, took refuge in the port of Stralsund, where they were ill treated by the Pomeranian conscripts. Bernadotte could not, without lowering himself in the opinion of his new compatriots, permit any stranger to arrogate to himself the right of acting the policeman in his territory, and especially in such an aggressive manner. On his side, Napoleon was not the man to disavow his privateers. He demanded the punishment of the ringleaders of the riot in peremptory language, the haughtiness and severity of which were not softened by Alquier, his minister in Sweden. Alquier, an old member of the Convention, but long since reconciled to the tyranny against which he had formerly so

[1] Champagny to Alquier, April 15, 1811.

often declaimed, was totally devoid of tact and moderation. The demagogue in fact was still to be found beneath the diplomatist. 'Wounding every one,' as Caulaincourt expressed it, he hated Bernadotte, and his despatches home were couched in the most violent style. They were full of nothing but Bernadotte's madness, his mediocrity, his good-natured triviality, his silly incapacity, and the absurdity of his dress. Such reports were not calculated to have a calming effect upon Napoleon.

But this incident, lamentable though it was, could not be considered as a rupture with Sweden, so important an ally in the event of a war with Russia, for the simple reason that she could turn all the Russian armies and directly menace St. Petersburg. How much stronger reason was there not for indulgence and moderation, if the privateers had really exceeded their powers in attacking the Swedish vessels? and in the end, this was precisely what Napoleon himself admitted. Writing to Davout a little later, he declared in so many express words 'that the privateers had abused General Rapp's influence, by ravaging the coasts and committing injustices which involved France in quarrels.'[1] But ought the Emperor to admit that his agents, even the most insignificant, could have been wrong? Must he not sustain the *prestige* and supremacy of the Empire above all else? Alquier was recalled, it is true, from Stockholm, but not before he had had time to exasperate Bernadotte's susceptibility, and to destroy all chance of reconciliation. Driven to extremities by our harsh proceedings, too weak to remain isolated in the midst of the convulsions of Europe, and forced at length to look to her own safety, Sweden receded from us and turned more and more towards Russia.[2]

[1] Napoleon to Davout, December 2, 1811.

[2] *Archives des Affaires étrangères: Suède*, 296. Alquier's despatches of July, August, and September 1811.

CHAPTER XIII

ORGANISATION OF THE ARMY OF ATTACK ON RUSSIA—MEASURES AGAINST THE REFRACTORY CONSCRIPTS—INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL CRISIS—SESSION OF 1811—BIRTH OF THE KING OF ROME—THE NATIONAL COUNCIL—IMMINENCE OF A RUPTURE WITH RUSSIA

(*May–December* 1811)

THE above-mentioned negotiations, even when crowned with success, were nevertheless unfortunate, as they were incapable of procuring for us other than false friendships; nor could they reconcile any one to the domineering rule which inspired no feelings but hatred and distrust. But they were far from occupying the first place in the Emperor's mind. A number of other important affairs divided his attention. In the first rank stood the settlement of the difficulties with the Church and the Papacy; difficulties which made little noise, but which none the less kept deep discontent alive amongst the population of the Empire; next came the industrial and commercial crisis, which was the consequence—long delayed but absolutely fatal—of the measures regarding the blockade; lastly, and chief of all, were his military preparations against Russia, then the object of his predilection, his daily and hourly thought, the principal, essential, and sole point upon which he concentrated his incomparable talent for organisation. If one considers that at the same time he contrived to attend to every detail of the interior administration of his immense Empire, and to direct the military operations of Spain and Portugal from Paris, it will not seem surprising that his

activity, prodigious though it was, proved unequal to such a task, or that, wellnigh overpowered by the extent and multiplicity of his affairs, he no longer touched any of them except, so to speak, by fitful impulses, and never with that steadiness or assiduity which is so indispensable for their proper management.

A defect of this kind was now more serious than ever, because method, certainty, and judgment, qualities essential for the supreme direction of so vast and varied an amount of business, were beginning to fail him, and his genius, though still powerful, was running to exaggeration and disorder. Though as fertile as ever in expedients, in talent for combination, in resources of every description, and in an astonishing power in the art of subordinating the smallest details to the attainment of his ends, he had lost, if indeed he ever possessed it, that delicate tact and higher sense which at the first glance discovers the inherent possibility of an enterprise, and the limits which cannot be overstepped. But in the arrangement of military matters, where the first essential consisted in administering and organising the immense resources under his hand, and where the operations depended less on moral appreciation than on calculations made with almost mathematical precision, his genius shone forth in all its practical strength and all its marvellous creative power. Ever since he had foreseen and almost determined upon war with Russia, he had applied himself unceasingly to the formation of an army that should prove worthy of the gigantic projects of universal dominion which he had conceived—in other words, one such as the world had never yet beheld. By the number and force of that army, it was evident that, even in his own eyes, his plans were beyond the common order of things, and that their success depended altogether upon victory. But if they were thus unstable and unjustifiable, he was at least resolved to give them a material support beyond all precedent. Had not his policy been always at variance with prudence and with the spirit of his age, and was it not his sword which had uniformly settled all difficulties?

In truth, the army destined for what he already began

to call 'the Russian war' was everything in his eyes, and he cared little whether that war were contrary to all principles of reason and justice or not, provided he considered himself certain of success. No sooner did his original fear of being taken unawares subside, than the question of success began to seem less and less doubtful. In the month of December 1810 the conscription had furnished 120,000 men, the amount of the levy of 1811, to which he proposed to add 30,000 more above the age of fourteen for the naval conscription. The measure had been praised by orators in the Senate, as a mark of exceptional generosity, since it was the first time for many years that the conscription had not been made by an anticipatory levy; but no one seemed to notice the bitter irony contained in the fact of their considering the strict carrying out of the law as a kindness vouchsafed to them by the Emperor. The recruits were drafted into skeleton regiments (*cadres*) taken from the old corps of the army of Germany. Owing to these reinforcements, the corps of observation formed upon the Elbe, the Rhine, and in Italy soon became real armies, the first comprising five divisions, and the two others four. A reserve corps, composed of four other divisions, was formed in the south of France, whence reinforcements could be sent to Spain or Italy as the case might require. At the same time all the Princes of the Germanic Confederation were desired to furnish their contingents. These preparations were pushed forward with so much activity, that Davout, who commanded the corps of observation on the Elbe, had in June 1811, 200,000 men ready to march at the first signal. His *corps d'armée* amounted to 120,000 men, the king of Saxony had 24,000, the duchy of Warsaw 34,000, and the king of Westphalia 15,900.[1] Thus on June 16, the day of the opening of the legislative session, Montalivet was able to print in his 'Statement of the situation of the Empire' that 'France had 800,000 men under arms!'

Notwithstanding the laudatory strains of the official reporters of the Senatus-Consultum on the conscription, as

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, June 23, 1811.

to the zeal and eagerness with which the youth of France were rushing to glory,[1] these great results were no longer obtained without the greatest efforts, and after considerable resistance. The profound silence so systematically observed on our losses in Spain had not prevented the truth from oozing out. Though it might not be precisely known to what extent the war in that country had been disastrous, it was at least known that it had been most sanguinary, and the news of the fresh one which was arising, without the justification of any necessity or interest whatsoever, threw the public into a species of stupor. Families tried by every means in their power to withhold their children from military service, and the number of young men who escaped from it by flight had increased to unheard-of proportions. Two facts alone suffice to show the true value of the pleasing fictions of the senatorial orators; first, that in that very year of 1811, 8000 francs (representing double that sum at the present day) was paid for a substitute,[2] and secondly, that the number of refractory conscripts amounted to nearly 80,000.

These delinquents, however, were the aggregate result of several years' resistance to the law, and their disobedience was too permanent a scandal to be longer tolerated. The government of that day possessed more authority than was absolutely necessary for bringing them to order, and no one could have disapproved of its putting down such a rebellion had the ministers used the means of constraint which the law afforded them. But legal measures, even though cruel in certain cases, were far from satisfying Napoleon's impatience and state of irritation. What he wanted, was not so much to succeed in suppressing the crime, as to be able to put his hand promptly on so large and energetic a reserve, and to embody it, at all costs, in his army. Speedily to attain this result, the most expeditious method was to involve the greatest number possible in the arrests, and to interest even

[1] Reports of St. Jean d'Angély and of Lacepède; Sittings of the 10th and 13th of December 1810.

[2] The author has the above fact from an unimpeachable witness; from a man, in short, who speaks of what happened to *himself*.

the relations and friends of each refractory conscript against him by attacking them on his account.

This barbarous expedient had been conceived and practised by the Directory against the insurgents of La Vendée, but the First Consul had prided himself on abolishing it at a period when he was merciful by calculation. Now, however, it was not considered enough to re-establish the principle of the *Laws of Hostages* which had formerly been so justly condemned; but it was generalised, by extending it not only to the family of the refractory conscript, but to his whole *commune*, and sometimes even to the entire canton. The penalty was one calculated to fall most heavily on the poor, for it consisted in having to lodge, feed, and pay a certain number of soldiers called *garnisaires*, until the refractory individual should have submitted. The fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, of the delinquent, all those in whose houses he might have eaten, drunk, or slept, and lastly the very *commune* itself, were successively made responsible for a purely personal offence.[1]

Even these merciless proceedings did not operate sufficiently fast to please Napoleon, and the *garnisaires* were supported by bodies of soldiers, known under the name of *Infernal Columns*, which levied contributions, and spread terror throughout whole districts. Such measures undoubtedly proved efficacious, but they show what the formation of a *grande armée* then cost, and into what a degree of languor the nation had sunk despite its traditionary taste for military life. Any means were considered good in order to elude so severe a service, but, on the other hand, so were any means which could be used to force men into it; and if flight was of little avail, immunity was no better secured either by those who had retired on half-pay or who could afford to obtain substitutes. Both these latter classes were invariably included after a certain lapse of time in new categories, and it was not rare to meet young men who had paid three or four times running in

[1] See the decrees in the *Bulletin des Lois*,—although somewhat incomplete—of January 12, April 5, and September 23, 1811.

order to be exempted, and yet were not on that account any more certain of escape.

Even so abridged a statement of the popular sufferings shows how dearly the French nation paid for the honour—which had by this time become a rather doubtful one—of having given a master to Europe. And even this was not all, for the evils created by the 'continental system' were far more cruel. That the blockade was the direct and principal cause of the industrial crisis which exhausted France during the winter of 1811 no one can seriously contest, even though it may be admitted that our interminable wars also contributed towards it not a little. One of the advantages which Napoleon had discovered in this strange plan, after it had been put in force, was its creating, in favour of France, a sort of industrial and commercial monopoly. Our manufacturers, in fact, by means of the licences and sales of seized goods, received the only raw materials, such as cotton, dye-woods, indigo, etc., that were admitted upon the Continent, and were consequently enabled to maintain the privilege of manufacturing them, besides also calculating on the markets of Europe even though they possessed no outlet by sea. The same applied to all other colonial products of which he had contrived to reserve for us the exclusive trade, under the restricted conditions to which he had reduced it.

On these data, so theoretically reassuring, our manufacturers had ventured upon an extraordinary production. On the other hand, speculators vied with each other in laying in a stock of colonial products, calculated for the consumption of the whole of Europe. But, however just this calculation might seem in theory, it could not but prove false in practice, because the extraordinary rise in prices which followed upon the blockade had not been sufficiently taken into account. In the first place, the English, owing to our measures against neutrals, and by the repressive competition, had absolute control of the price of such colonial merchandise as they alone possessed, and this they sold to the holders of licences at enormous rates. They made them pay four or five francs for a pound of sugar

that did not cost them more than half a franc. Thus the trader provided with a licence bought his goods at a very high price; and then had to add to their cost first that of the merchandise which he had been obliged to throw into the sea, because Napoleon had forced him to export it though it was prohibited in England, then the very heavy sum he gave for the purchase of the licence itself, and lastly his own profits. It is easy to understand the high figure which goods burdened with similar charges must have attained before they reached either our manufactories or our shops. The produce of the seizures became equally unpurchaseable from the successive duties, especially that of fifty per cent, which Napoleon imposed upon them.

The result was exactly what ought to have been foreseen, namely, that the goods remained unsold. Their high prices were equivalent to a premium to smugglers, who reaped all the profits lost by the regular trade. The manufacturers had to stop their works; the banks that advanced money to them, not being repaid their advances, had to suspend payments, and all trade being more or less interdependent, and affected by the war, even those branches of it which seemed least subject to foreign influence, such as the wool and silk departments, were involved in the common disaster.

Napoleon endeavoured to check the crisis by an advance of some millions, which he caused to be made to the merchants who suffered most, without paying any attention to the wise representations of Mollien, and other competent men by whom he was surrounded. He never could be made to admit that his will, which was capable of achieving so much, would have no influence on credit. Such assistance saved no one. He lent as much as 1,500,000 francs to one single house,[1] but was soon obliged to relinquish such aid owing to the enormous amount of the demands.

The orders for military provisions, and furniture for the Imperial Palaces, in some measure alleviated the distress of the working classes; but even if all the resources of the government had been exclusively devoted to allaying the

[1] Mollien, *Mémoires d'un Ministre du Trésor*.

evil, they would have proved insufficient to revive the state of business. The only effectual remedy for so much misery would have been the withdrawal of the measures which had brought on the crisis; but that was the one step which Napoleon would never allow to be mentioned. On the 25th of March 1811 the delegates of the Chamber of Commerce, headed by the two great manufacturers of the day, Martin and Ternaux, having endeavoured to offer some timid observations on the remedies applicable to the evils from which trade and commerce were suffering, he cut them short without allowing them to say one word on the subject of their grievances. Launching forth into a long and incoherent apology for the continental system and for his policy, intermingled with menaces, aimed at Russia, which were at least ill-judged at a time when he was still anxious to deceive her and to conceal his armaments, he said:—

'Merchants were complaining as usual, and yet it was by their fault that the crisis had occurred. They had wished to enrich themselves at any cost, to enrich themselves too rapidly, to win fortunes as one wins a battle, instead of calculating on the invariably slow results of labour and economy. They had no one but themselves to blame if they were the victims of their own avidity. As to him, he had remained faithful to his system, which consisted in subduing England. His decrees of Berlin and of Milan had been much derided, but nevertheless England was now declining, *she was ruined!* He had possession of the whole coast of Europe, he built five-and-twenty ships every year, before long he would have a navy of two hundred vessels, and England would be forced to submit. Until then, woe betide any Continental State which would refuse to second him! He would *cut with his sword* every intrigue that the English might try to concoct with such powers; he would annex every such state as he had annexed all those who had resisted him. At Tilsit he had *favoured* the emperor of Russia in return for his promises of support, but if those promises were not kept, he would go *to Riga, to Moscow, to St. Petersburg*, if necessary! He

was not simply a King of France, he was *Emperor of the Continent*, he had 200,000,000 francs in the cellars of the Tuileries. France was the richest country on the globe, and in any case he would not change one iota in his customs tariff; of that they might be quite certain.'

A rambling speech like this, which touched upon every point except the precise subject of the commercial grievances, produced no other effect than that of informing Napoleon's astonished hearers that, in addition to his old rooted idea of subduing England by starving Europe, a new idea of seeking for a fresh enemy at the extremity of the Continent was beginning to haunt the Imperial brain. The threats aimed at Russia in this unfortunate allocution created an immense sensation abroad. For some time the public offices and the newspapers were solely occupied in reproducing it in every variety, and the impression produced seemed so bad even to the Emperor himself, that he caused a summary of the speech to be published, which amounted almost to a retractation.

It was, however, perfectly true, as he had stated, that the continental crisis reverberated in England. That country undoubtedly could not fail to feel the effects of the general suffering throughout Europe, were it merely by reaction, but the form it took in England was that of accumulation and superabundance, which is not exactly the same as suffering arising from distress. Her docks, now become the entrepôt of the world, were overflowing with merchandise, principally sugar and coffee. The cotton trade alone had been seriously affected by imprudent speculations.[1] In France, the instances of accumulation had occurred only in some manufactories, and on the part of some privileged holders of foreign produce, whilst everywhere else, the most utter destitution and confirmed poverty prevailed. In England, on the contrary, this unusual accumulation of riches and products of every description had taken place throughout the industrial and commercial classes; for, although the destruction of com-

[1] Report of the Select Committee on the state of Commercial Credit, March 1811.

petition had entirely operated in their favour, no sufficient outlets could momentarily be found for their goods, however certain they might be of ultimately recovering their position in foreign markets. Proof of this exists in that inexhaustible fund of credit which permitted England to borrow 1,000,000,000 francs a year; a difficult problem truly, and one which the master of Europe could not certainly have solved in his favour.

On the 20th of March 1811, precisely when the crisis was at its worst, that child was born whose birth had been announced by Napoleon even before he was wedded to Marie-Louise, as though nature itself was one of his subjects and but too happy to obey him. The same acclamations which had greeted the Imperial marriage resounded around the cradle of the king of Rome, for enthusiasm had long since ceased to be more than a machine scientifically organised and set in motion at will. But the hopes of peace originally founded on the Austrian marriage had been too cruelly deceived to allow of their being again entertained, and public confidence had no place this time in the manifestations of official joy. No event ever was more loudly sung and celebrated in the churches, the palaces, and even the most obscure villages. The 101 guns which announced it to Paris were repeated from Dantzig to Cadiz, in every spot where we had a regiment or a battery of artillery. Wellington relates in his correspondence, with a surprise not far from irony, how an officer came to inform him on the part of Masséna, then in full retreat, of the inoffensive nature of certain discharges of artillery. Notwithstanding the warning, he believed, he says, that an attack was intended, for it seemed to him too improbable that so joyous a demonstration could be made by an army that was exposed to such suffering. How many times had those same guns and those same soldiers announced to the world our oaths of 'eternal war to tyrants!' How could they be supposed now to proclaim anything but our never-ceasing restlessness? and if—as it was said with most surprising simplicity—the birth of the Imperial heir insured the perpetuity of the *régime*, what hope could those

unfortunate men have of ever beholding the end of their woes?

The Senate and the Council of State on this occasion came forward with their customary adulation: 'We are the first,' said the President of the Senate, 'to bear to the foot of the throne the echoes of those transports of delight and those shouts of joy which the birth of the king of Rome has called forth throughout the whole Empire. Your people greet with universal acclamation *this new star* which has risen on the horizon of France, and whose first ray disperses the very smallest shadows of the darkness of the future.'[1] The whole senatorial harangue was in the same ecstatic strain, and this passage must not be considered an exceptional exaggeration; I quote it rather because no one could form a true idea of the abject servility of the public authorities of that period, unless I reproduced the accent and dominant tone of the official language. This specimen will give an idea of the flights of imagination which must have been taken by poets whose professed duty it was to go much farther. Beyond the stars there were but the gods, and amongst them it was that they searched for comparisons with which to greet the arrival of the *new Messiah*.[2] The *Moniteur* published numberless paraphrases of a celebrated verse:—

'Jam nova progenies coelo dimittitur alto.'—'Lightning flashes, the heavens open and present thy likeness beneath the features of thy son.'

Owing to the Legislative Body not being convoked until two months later, it missed the opportunity of evincing its zeal in flattering its master. But on the other hand, it was admitted somewhat later to the special honour of presenting its respects to the child itself. The president of this Legislative Body, which was the direct descendant of the Constituent Assembly and the Convention, went at the head of a select deputation to harangue the infant when

[1] Speech of Comte Garnier, President of the Senate, March 22, 1811.

[2] *Le Noël Nouveau, hommage d'un troubadour*, par Armand Gouffé.

[3] Debriére.

two months old. He spoke to it of the attachment of the Assembly, and received and transmitted to his colleagues the answer made by the *gouvernante!* The following are the terms in which he reported his glorious mission: 'We conveyed to him, gentlemen, the expression of your most tender sentiments, mingled with such wishes as the love of our children inspires us with. *Madame la gouvernante* received them, and thanked us in the name of the young prince, regretting no doubt that she was unable to add his personal sentiments to those which she expressed to the Legislative Body.'[1]

The speech thus delivered beside the cradle of the king of Rome was wellnigh the greatest achievement of the legislative session of 1811. Napoleon, as we already said, had long since intended to suppress the Legislative Body, as he had previously suppressed the Tribunates. But, before striking the decisive blow at this phantom of an assembly, he wished that every one should be convinced of its inutility. He therefore deprived it by degrees of all its real attributes, supplied laws by means of decrees, by a Senatus-Consultum, or even by mere decisions, and at length succeeded in leaving it no business to transact. In 1811 this became more evident than ever. Hence in 1812 he no longer took the futile precaution of convoking a Legislative Body, whose absence was scarcely noticed, so cleverly had the public been prepared for the suppression of this useless piece of machinery. The official reports of the session of 1811 form one of those historic monuments which most fully exhibit the spirit of the Napoleonic institutions, and of the part which Bonaparte wished to assign to the national representation, for it was then and then only, that, having been brought to a state of perfection by slow degrees, the Legislative Body attained the definite form he had always destined for it—that, namely, of an absolute cypher. The reports of the twenty sittings of which the session of 1811 was composed occupied only fifty pages.

[1] Speech of President de Montesquieu at the sitting of July 25, 1811.

The budget, which was the single important matter brought before the Assembly, was adopted and voted in one sitting, upon a report consisting of a few lines by the Deputy Mollérus, and without one speech being made upon the motion.[1] The other sittings were occupied by the Emperor's message; by a statement of the situation of the Empire, drawn up by the Minister Montalivet; by the appointment of the officials; the reports of the works presented to the Legislative Body; the eulogiums passed on deceased members; finally, by laws authorising alienations and purchases or exchanges of communal property,—the only legislative business that had been left to the representatives of the nation. When these matters were gone through, the deputies retired with the same resignation which they had displayed in assembling, accompanied by ironical marks of respect a thousand times sharper in their derisive pomp than the bayonets at whose points they had once been driven from the Orangery at St. Cloud.

Owing to the very barren results of this session, the two Imperial manifestoes which marked its opening were the more commented upon. After casting a glance at the situation of Europe, at the late annexations of territory,—which were represented to be the natural consequence of 'the principles adopted by the English Government,'—and at the progressive diminution of the Spanish insurrection, the Emperor alluded to the last battles fought by Wellington, and declared that 'English blood has at length flowed in streams.' This exclamation was prompted by the wish of his heart, and made a great and lasting sensation in Europe. Far from taking into account the strength which England, by fighting in the heart of the Peninsula, had imparted to Spanish resistance, he looked upon her presence there only as affording him the certainty of conquering her in Spain instead of having to pursue her on the ocean. He foretold that a day was coming when 'half her families would be plunged into mourning, and a clap of thunder would avenge Europe and Asia by terminating this second Punic war.'[2]

[1] Sitting of July 15, 1811. *Archives parlementaires.*

[2] Speech at the opening of the Legislative Body, June 10, 1811.

And this was all the instruction he had derived from the grave events that had just taken place in the Peninsula!

The *report on the situation of the Empire*, which was read at the sitting of June 26, was a mere paraphrase of the Imperial message, but its matter-of-fact style proved, even better than the message itself, the extraordinary depth of Napoleon's illusions. It especially contained an examination of the comparative state of France and England, perfectly alarming from its one-sided optimism. In France everything was going on in the very best manner; the *continental system had changed nothing in our situation;* the prohibition of English merchandise had given us the markets of the Continent; France might continue in the same state for ten years, defraying all her expenses and yet not increasing her debt. England, on the contrary, had closed half her counting-houses, borrowed 800 millions a year, and had no resource left but bankruptcy; moreover, we soon should have one hundred and fifty ships of the line to impose peace upon her; 'peace which would no doubt be useful to us, but was far more to be desired by our enemies!'[1]

The report, like the message, made allusion to Napoleon's differences with the Holy See, but without giving any idea of the insulting manner in which he had behaved towards Pius VII. personally. 'If the half of Europe has separated itself from the Church of Rome,' he said, not untruly, 'it may be especially attributed to the contradiction which has not yet ceased to exist between the principles of religion that are for the universe, and the pretensions and interests that only regard a very small corner of Italy. I have put an end to this scandal for ever, I have annexed Rome to the Empire. I have granted palaces to the Popes in Rome and in Paris. If they have the interests of religion at heart, they will desire to reside often at the centre of the affairs of Christendom. It was for this reason that St. Peter preferred Rome to the Holy Land.' Montalivet completely withdrew the veil by announcing that 'the Pope's refusal to institute the Bishops nominated by the

[1] *Exposé de la situation de l'Empire*, June 29, 1811.

Emperor had rendered the Concordat null, *and that it no longer existed.*'[1]

The majority of the public was thus for the first time made acquainted with the serious nature of a quarrel, the existence of which they had hitherto scarcely noticed. At the same time they were informed that a Council, which was about to be held in Paris, would decide 'whether France, like Germany, should do without an Episcopate.' What could have passed between the Pope and the Emperor to induce the very author of the Concordat to proclaim a transaction null and void on which he had prided himself so often as a masterpiece of wisdom? or to make the implacable enemy to all discussion and assemblies of his own accord convoke a Council, which was in every respect a kind of States-General of the Church of France?

The cause was not far to seek. It simply lay in the fact that Napoleon's disputes with the Holy Father had of late, from the patient tenacity of the Pontiff and the violence of the Emperor, assumed such a degree of exasperation that the counsellors of the latter had ultimately by urgent entreaty persuaded him to adopt this middle course, and had thus succeeded in diverting him from the deplorable extremities to which he was on the point of being led. No fresh resolve, no new acts on the part of Pius VII. had provoked his anger. Separated from all his advisers, held in captivity at Savona, despoiled not only of all his privileges but of all his rights, the Pope continued to use the sole weapon that had been left to him for the recovery of his liberty by refusing to institute the bishops nominated by the Emperor. With the view of forcing him to give up this purely defensive position, Napoleon had with very great ingenuity devised a method in which his selected bishops might be instituted provisionally, by obliging the Chapters to elect them as Vicars-Capitular, thus conferring on them a temporary right to administer the dioceses. This expedient, by which institution by the Pope was dispensed with, would in the end have neutralised his opposition, if Pius VII. had not sent the Chapters express orders forbidding

[1] Statement on the situation of the Empire, June 29, 1811.

them to elect as Vicars-Capitular any of the bishops so nominated. This step, which in no wise exceeded his spiritual powers, and was a measure strictly conservative of a right that undeniably belonged to the Holy See, was the only one which the prisoner of Savona had permitted himself since the overtures made to him by Napoleon at Savona through Cardinals Spina and Caselli.

Foremost amongst the Chapters which received this order were those of Florence, Asti, and especially Paris, which had long struggled against a bishop nominated but not instituted, namely, Cardinal Maury, the docile and accommodating instrument of Napoleon's views. This prelate was in some sort placed under an interdict by the papal prohibition, which found many ardent and zealous promoters in the very heart of the Chapter. Chief amongst these bold opponents was the Grand-Vicar-Capitular, Canon d'Astros, on whom the perilous honour devolved of receiving the communications from Pius VII. Napoleon suspected his intrigues, and having abruptly questioned him in presence of the whole court and the great bodies of the State, d'Astros was confused by the Emperor's threats and invectives, and his arrest was instantly decided upon. On leaving the audience chamber, Maury himself took him in his carriage to Savary, for that minister, having been ordered to arrest him, had confided his honourable mission to the cardinal, in order to avoid scandal.[1] There, under the cunning interrogations of the Minister of Police, d'Astros ultimately confessed not only that he had received the Pope's briefs, but had further communicated them to his cousin Portalis, Councillor of State and Director of the Library. Portalis, no doubt, had received that confidential communication, but, far from having propagated the offensive document, he had apprised his friend Pasquier, the Prefect of Police, of its existence, and the only crime he could be accused of was that of not having informed upon his relative d'Astros.

But Napoleon wished by one stroke to stop what he called *the scandalous fight* of the petty priesthood (*prêtaille*)

[1] *Mémoires* of the Duc de Rovigo.

against his authority.'[1] He troubled himself very little whether his grievances were legitimate or not, when once he had resolved to produce some startling effect by intimidation. The higher the rank which the individual he intended to strike occupied amongst his special officials, the better it suited his plans. In fact, it was necessary to aim at the very highest in order to insure the stroke having due effect. On the 4th of January, therefore, at a full meeting of the Council of State, after making some vague complaints on the subject of the ecclesiastical intrigues, he suddenly addressed the trembling Portalis, reproaching him in bitter terms for his ingratitude and treachery; and then, without allowing him time to defend himself or to recover from his confusion, ordered him to leave the Council Chamber and never again to reappear in it. The unhappy Portalis, like a man suddenly struck by lightning, murmured a few incoherent words, and then losing his head, quitted the room, leaving his colleagues, who were dumb with terror and humiliation, to face the Imperial wrath, till it spent itself on empty space and silence. Pasquier alone ventured to say something in favour of the minister who was thus sent off in disgrace, and courageously spoke of the confidential communication that had been made to him.

This noisy scene was intended to impress upon officials and magistrates of every degree that obedience was expected from them, even to the extent of informing on their own relatives if necessary. Still more significant measures showed the clergy that ecclesiastics who might prefer to obey the Pope rather than the Emperor would be punished without mercy. Canon d'Astros was imprisoned at Vincennes and kept there until the fall of the Empire, while Cardinals di Pietro, Oppizoni, and Gabrielli, convicted of having circulated the Papal manifestoes, were soon afterwards shut up in the same fortress. The ringleaders in the Chapters at Asti and Florence were found guilty of the same offence and sent to the prison of Fenestrella, where Cardinal Pacca and several other ecclesiastics were already confined.

But it was futile to strike the instruments, if the hand

[1] Napoleon to Prince Eugène, January 5, 1811.

which guided them was allowed to escape. These men, after all, were mere accomplices; the true criminal, in Napoleon's eyes, was the Pope. But what new chastisement could he inflict upon a sovereign whom he had already despoiled of his States and reduced to the direst captivity? In his first moment of anger the Emperor's idea was to depose the Pope, not from a principality but from the Popedom itself. A note of his exists, addressed to his librarian Barbier, and dated on the morrow of the day upon which he expelled Portalis from the Council of State, in which he inquires 'If there are any instances of Emperors having deposed Popes?'[1] While waiting to have this doubt cleared up, he issued orders to have the prisoner of Savona treated with the utmost rigour, desired the few personal comforts he still enjoyed to be suppressed, and lowered his allowance to that of an official of the fourth rank. Nay more; he was watched and kept in sight, deprived of his carriages, forbidden all communication or correspondence with the outer world, his confessor and most special personal attendants imprisoned, his papers seized, his writing-desk, pens, breviary, and even a leather purse containing a few gold coins, all taken from him. Finally, as a fit crown to such insults, the Fisherman's Ring, which the agents who had conducted the search had not been able to discover, was demanded from him by Lagrose, the captain of the gendarmerie. Such was the base and cowardly persecution of an infirm and defenceless old man, to which he was bold enough to resort who one day was to complain so loudly of the harshness of his own captivity at St. Helena, a captivity which was mildness itself when compared with the manner in which he treated his adversary.[2]

These measures of intimidation, though calculated to terrify a clergy not remarkable for firmness, did not solve the difficulty, which continued the same as ever. The Chapter of Paris made protestations of submission and

[1] Dated on January 25, 1811.

[2] The above insults have often been imputed to Napoleon's agents, but the inedited letters of the Emperor, which have been published by Count Haussonville, irrefragably prove that Napoleon was their author.

attachment in an undignified address, and the Italian Chapters imitated their example with servile readiness. But the Episcopal Sees none the less remained vacant, for want of the canonical institution. In his impatience to end the matter, Napoleon would gladly have cut the question short by means of the Senate, but his advisers represented to him that Catholics perhaps might not consider that the authority of the Senate was sufficient for such an act. In this way, therefore, it was that the Emperor was insensibly led on to the idea, which at first sight seems so extraordinary, of convoking a Council. He had always found ecclesiastics so weak and so docile, that he felt certain of ruling a general assembly of the clergy, and of transforming it into a sort of Legislative Body for spiritual affairs. A well-directed Council would put an end to the existing difficulties, avert all danger of schism, permit him to dispense with the Pope, and perhaps to govern the Church.

Before taking so serious a step, however, it was necessary to draw up a programme of the clearest description regarding the questions which should be submitted to the Council, and to inquire as to its probable chances of success. To enlighten himself on this point, Napoleon consulted the ecclesiastical Committee, which he modified at the same time by introducing into it some prelates according to his own heart, such as Cardinal Caselli and the Abbé de Pradt, nominated, but not instituted, to the Archbishopric of Malines. The questions submitted to the Committee were the same which were to be presented to the Council. For instance, all communication with the Pope being interrupted, whom was it necessary to address in order to obtain either the dispensations which he distributed, or the canonical institution which he refused to the appointed bishops? As far as regarded the bishops, the question was one of a most embarrassing and complicated nature.

The forms of their enthronisation had, it is true, varied very much in past times. But no matter how remote the period referred to, the intervention of both the lay and the ecclesiastical elements was always to be found in it. Even in the days when bishops were elected, though the faithful

might nominate, it was the Metropolitan who instituted them. The simultaneous concurrence of the two distinct powers, independent of each other, always existed in it. Besides, what Napoleon really wished was the suppression of one of those elements for the advantage of the other; for, in the actual organisation of the political and religious powers, the Metropolitan no longer possessed independence sufficient to enable him to exercise an authority which, in consequence of so many successive revolutions, had devolved upon the Pope. It would have been impossible to restore the power of institution to the Metropolitan, except by releasing him from every tie of dependence upon the civil authority; and even then, in the eyes of Catholics, the Church alone would have the competence necessary to sanction such a return to primitive traditions.

The difficulty was not a new one. It was the same, in fact, which had fettered the efforts of the Constituent Assembly when it was decreeing the civil constitution of the clergy. Since then, it has reappeared very often, under one form or another, and, as it can only be solved by the reciprocal independence of Church and State, it is not surprising that, even in the present day, governments which are more solicitous for their own authority than for liberty of worship should go on aggravating the difficulty by imagining that they can terminate it by main force. The ecclesiastical Committee of 1811 could not deceive themselves as to the real significance of the Emperor's pretensions, but they were animated by an immense desire to please him, and their answer in its vagueness bears the impress of this twofold feeling. They expressed profound grief at beholding all communication broken off with the Pope, 'the centre of ecclesiastical unity,' and their hope of seeing it soon restored. They thought that Provincial Councils might institute, if the Pope refused to do so, 'without alleging a canonical reason, but the decision of the question belonged to a national Council. They, consequently, desired with all their heart that such a Council might be summoned, though not until they should have sent a depu-

tation to the Pope to enlighten him on the wants of the Church of France.'[1]

In short, the Committee did no more than point out the course to be followed, with a view to effect a reconciliation, which they must have known to be all but hopeless. Abbé Emery, the most enlightened and eminent of its members, did not conceal from the Emperor that, in all probability, the Pope would never give up his right of institution.[2] Hence, when Napoleon decided on sending the deputation, he did so with very little expectation of success, and far more from a secret desire of casting the onus of the evil on the Pontiff's obstinacy than from any hope of converting him to his views. Nevertheless, he took the most elaborate precautions for taking advantage of the trouble of mind into which the Pope had been thrown by the intimidation used against him.

It was the Emperor's wish that the step on the part of the bishops should be represented to the Holy Father as a thoroughly spontaneous act of the French Episcopate, and that the programme of the Council, of which he himself was the sole author, should appear as a kind of ultimatum addressed to the Pope by the Church of France, on the point of breaking off from Rome. In order to create an effect likely to influence the prisoner at Savona, he took care to fix the time for the convocation of the Council, before the deputation started, in a circular which was nothing but a series of accusations against Pius VII. He thus seemed to have come to a decision beforehand as to a rupture, which appeared inevitable, and left the Pope no alternative but to submit or to refuse everything. Moreover, he induced nineteen bishops, assembled at the house of Cardinal Fesch, to sign a distinct summons, which appeared to express the opinion of the whole French clergy, and in which the Sovereign Pontiff was implored 'not to reduce the Church of France to the distressing necessity of providing for her own preservation.'[3] The threat was

[1] *Fragments relatifs à l'histoire ecclésiastique*, by Monsgr. de Barral, Archbishop of Tours. This collection reflects the views of the Committee, and reproduces the principal documents drawn up by its leaders.

[2] D'Haussonville. [3] De Barral, *Fragments sur l'histoire ecclésiastique.*

most direct, however well disguised under the form of a prayer.

The three bishops chosen to proceed to the Holy Father were better known for ability and eminence in theology than for independence of character. They were De Barral, Archbishop of Tours; Duvoisin, Bishop of Nantes; and Mannay, Bishop of Trèves. They were instructed to propose the restoration of the Concordat, on the twofold condition that the Pope should consent to institute the bishops already nominated, and should exercise in future his right of institution within the three months following the nomination made by the Emperor, in default of which the institution should be made by the Metropolitan. If the Pope evinced conciliatory dispositions, they might propose a more extended treaty to him, grounded upon the basis of his return to Rome, on condition of his taking the oath to the Emperor. Should he object to the oath, then they might be satisfied with a simple promise to do nothing against the Gallican liberties, but in such case the Pope's residence would be fixed at Avignon. He should receive a salary of two millions, have the *chargés d'affaires* of Christendom around him, and the enjoyment of his spiritual administration; but in any case the restoration of the temporal power of the Popes would be out of the question.[1] The deputies were not to make their powers known, unless they found the Pope in 'a reasonable frame of mind.'

On arriving at Savona early in the month of May 1811, the three bishops found Pius VII. subjected to the description of cellular system which Napoleon had inflicted on him for nearly five months past, under the supreme *surveillance* of the Prefect of Montenotte, M. de Chabrol. Everything had been so well contrived to intimidate him, that, for the moment, he thought that the three prelates had come to commence his trial before the Council. They have themselves described how they had to tranquillise him on this point.[2] After having calmed his fears by the most earnest demonstrations of respect and attachment, they represented

[1] Instructions for the three bishops, April 26, 1811.
[2] First letter of the bishops, May 10, 1811.

to him—speaking as if in the name of the clergy—the necessity for putting an end to the distressing situation of the Church of France, and then explained in general terms the conditions of settlement, without however immediately informing him of the promise which the Emperor required relative to the Gallican liberties.

The Pope, agreeably undeceived as to the fresh severities he had been dreading, showed a somewhat conciliatory disposition, alluded with touching goodness to his old friendship for Napoleon, and spoke without acrimony of the harsh captivity to which he was condemned. But he insisted, not unreasonably, on the impossibility of his coming to any decision, so long as he was not free and surrounded by his habitual advisers. On this point he was invincible, for, every impartial mind must have considered it as a shocking abuse of power to force a prisoner to sign a treaty which was destined so profoundly to modify the constitution of the Church, while he was separated from his councillors, and subjected to treatment calculated to deprive him not only of all mental freedom but also of every means of study and careful appreciation of the subject.

In the subsequent interviews the Pope discussed the terms of the proposed compromise. He argued with much reason that the transfer of the right of institution to the Metropolitan, after a certain delay, was equivalent to the suppression of the Pontifical institution, and left nothing standing but the Emperor's right. He further observed that, though personally disposed never to dispute the Gallican liberties, he could not recognise them, since they had been condemned by one of his predecessors; but he returned to the necessity of his consulting the Doctors of the Church before coming to any decision.

The deputies, however, began to perceive that the old man's resistance was becoming less energetic. Above all, he was greatly disturbed by the idea that his refusals might cause a schism. His uneasiness brought on loss of sleep, and his health, always feeble, suffered from his scruples of conscience. From the moment that his resolution began to falter, the entreaties of the prelates became stronger.

The only intimate confidant whom the Pope then boasted was his doctor, who had been bribed by M. de Chabrol, and did all in his power to support the petitions of the bishops, as well as the alternately obsequious and menacing language of the Prefect of Montenotte. Exposed to these incessant entreaties, and his mind a prey to the sense of a responsibility, the weight of which he had no strength to bear, Pope Pius VII. grew weak, as he did in every critical circumstance of his life.[1] He consented, not to sign, but to accept a note, by which he bound himself, first, to institute the bishops already nominated by the Emperor; secondly, to leave their institution to the Metropolitan in case the Pope should not have exercised his right within the space of six months; and thirdly, to examine the proposals of settlement having for their object the restoration of the peace of the Church.

The prelates had no sooner quitted Savona than his lively imagination represented to him, with extraordinary force, all the consequences of this act of weakness. He reproached himself for it, as if he had been guilty of a kind of simony, a disgrace, or a crime. He desired to retract it at once, and had no rest until he sent messengers in haste after the bishops, to tell them that the note was only a draft, with no definite official character. Such inner struggles and scruples of conscience, the sincerity of which cannot be disputed, sufficiently show how difficult of solution was this question of the institution of the bishops, especially in the terms in which Nopoleon persisted in placing it; in other words, by annulling the spiritual power in favour of the civil authority. But the Emperor understood these difficulties so little, or at least took so little heed of them, that far from seeming satisfied with the extraordinary and unhoped-for concessions which his artifices had wrested from the weakness of the Holy Father, he hoped to obtain far better ones from the docility of the

[1] The report of the Prefect Chabrol, published for the first time by M. d'Haussonville in his remarkable *Histoire de l'Eglise romaine sous le premier Empire*, throws completely new light on the means employed by Napoleon to overcome the resistance of Pius VII.

Members of the Council. Hence arose the profound silence which he at first imposed upon the three bishops relative to the result of their negotiation with the Pope. It would be quite time enough, he thought, to fall back upon that negotiation as a last resource, should the assembly not answer his expectations in its readiness to please him.

The Council of 1811 was, strictly speaking, not a national one in the ordinary sense of the word, since it included the bishops of Italy besides those of France; nor œcumenical, which Napoleon would have preferred, since it had been found necessary to admit the impossibility of convoking the bishops of Spain and of some other Catholic countries. However, it was an imposing ecclesiastical meeting, which at the same time offered the Emperor, in its component parts, every guarantee of submission that he could desire. He was personally acquainted with the majority of the prelates, and had put their accommodating dispositions to the proof often enough to know that he might count upon them. But his strictly mathematical genius committed a serious mistake in supposing that a correct estimate of the spirit of an assembly can be made from the sum of the individual characters which contribute to form it, and that a Council composed of devoted bishops cannot fail to be servile.

Men united in one body have, in fact, scruples and susceptibilities to which as individuals they are quite insensible. This it is which makes assemblies so often disappoint the expectations of those who think they understand them best. The first sitting of the Council, opened in the name of the Emperor on the 17th of June 1811, ended by a solemn oath of obedience to the Pope. This oath was in itself almost a commonplace formality, but, when addressed to a State prisoner in presence of his persecutor, and resounding amidst the silence of bondage, it gave a completely new sense to the perilous circumstances in which the Catholic Church then stood. It powerfully impressed the imaginations of all present, and suddenly acquired the character and the accent of a kind of *Oath of a sacerdotal Jeu de Paume.* And who was the mover—involuntary most cer-

tainly—of this wellnigh hostile display? Cardinal Fesch, President of the Council, uncle to the Emperor, and the one most interested, both by position and natural inclination, in calming the public mind and avoiding every dangerous incident.

The oath, the exclamation which accompanied it and resembled an explosion of minds long repressed, the passionate impulse with which it was taken, and the unforeseen significance given to it, annoyed Napoleon in the highest degree. On the representation of his councillors he consented to regard the display as a mere traditional ceremony; but on the very next day he added to the Council two superintendents (*surveillants*) in the persons of Bigot de Préameneu and Marescalchi, Ministers of Public Worship in France and Italy. An Imperial message, full of offensive allusions to Pius VII., subsequently apprised the members of the Council of what was expected from their goodwill. Having denounced the *sinister projects of the Pope*, and the fatal effects of his bulls, 'which had excited general indignation,' Napoleon proceeded to trace the history of his disputes with the Holy See, carefully abstaining, however, from making the faintest allusion to his own violence towards the person of the Holy Father. He recalled the benefits he had showered upon the Church, announced his intention of 'providing for the transmission of the Episcopate in the manner that should be pointed out by the Council,' and of no longer tolerating 'that a single person should pretend to substitute his authority for that of all.'[1] No one dreamt, either of noticing how strange this republican maxim sounded in the mouth of the author of the 18th Brumaire, or of condemning the insults which the all-powerful Emperor addressed to his victim.

But although under the influence of terror, the assembly did not conceal its sentiments in the sitting in which the address in answer to the message was discussed: 'What!' exclaimed Dessoll, Bishop of Chambéry, 'we are discussing an address, and there is no question in it about the liberty

[1] *Discours d'ouverture*, given by the Emperor to the Minister of Public Worship, June 18, 1811.

of the Pope! Let us all go, if necessary, and throw ourselves at the Emperor's feet to ask it of him!'[1] This oratorical outburst produced an indescribable effect upon the assembly. Rising at once, amid loud applause, they proposed to go at once to St. Cloud, there to petition the Emperor; nor was it without great difficulty that Cardinal Fesch, seconded by some obsequious and cautious prelates, at last succeeded in postponing the proceeding.

Napoleon, more and more disappointed and irritated by the utterly unexpected though timid independence which he encountered amongst the members of the Council, testified his displeasure by refusing to receive their address. He reminded them, harshly, that he expected the settlement of the canonical institution and nothing else; giving them *eight days* in which to decide the question. It was necessary, therefore, to set about the examination of this most delicate difficulty as quickly as possible. At the first sitting of the committee chosen to consider the question, a capital objection presented itself, to which very little attention had been hitherto paid. In the matter of the Institution two rights existed, that of the Emperor and that of the Pope. Now a national Council, no matter what its authority, is restricted by its nature; is it then competent to decide upon a right which belongs to the Holy See? It is clearly evident, even from the Gallican point of view, that such a power ought only to appertain to the Church itself; or, in other words, to an œcumenical Council. Divided between a sense of duty and a fear of exasperating the Emperor, the committee spent several days in seeking for some means of conciliating the contradictory opinions, or rather the very opposite interests, at play in this debate. But after long vacillation the partisans of the Council's incompetency—namely, the bishops of Tournay, Bourdeaux, and Ghent — prevailed over the champions of Imperial omnipotence, Fesch, Duvoisin, and Barral.

Seeing, therefore, the impossibility of attaining any result, and the little effect produced by his sneers against those

[1] Journal of the Bishop of Ghent, Monsgr. de Broglie, published by M. de Haussonville.

whom he called 'the beadles of the Church,'[1] Napoleon at length decided on making known to the committee the concessions which the three bishops sent as deputies to Savona had obtained from the Pope. The transaction being thus proposed with the consent of the Holy See, it seemed as though every obstacle were removed. But the tardy communication was not as successful as was hoped, either because the very delay roused suspicion, or because something had transpired as to the change which had taken place in the mind of Pius VII. The committee, at first converted to the Emperor's ideas, almost immediately after reverted to its original feeling as to the incompetency of the Council. It consented, however, to accept the decree proposed in the name of the Emperor, but expressly stipulated that it should be submitted to the Pope for his approbation. On the 10th of July 1811 the Council met again to listen to the reading of the report by the Bishop of Tournay, who constituted himself the interpreter of the opinions of the committee. His conclusions spread trouble and agitation in the heart of the Assembly. The partisans of the Pope and of the Emperor began a series of mutual recriminations, alternately reproaching each other with usurping either the rights of the Church, or, on the other hand, the bull of excommunication; until, finally, the Archbishop of Bourdeaux exclaimed, 'If a Pope cannot excommunicate, then blame the Church which has so established it!'

This was far more than the partisan of the *power of all* as against the power of one alone could tolerate; and these words were the death-warrant of the national Council. On the morrow an Imperial decree appeared announcing its dissolution. Napoleon had, it is true, wished for a Council, but on condition of its always being of his opinion; the prelates, however, had strangely forgotten this essential point of the part they had been called together to perform. The three principal leaders of the opposition—the bishops of Tournay, Ghent, and Troyes—were arrested and thrown into the dungeons of Vincennes, without its being possible to accuse them of any crime but that of having expressed

[1] Life of Cardinal Fesch by the Abbe Lyonnet, vol. ii.

and maintained an opinion which they had been asked to give. But this conclusion, after all, was the logical consequence of a system totally incompatible with the existence of any free assembly. It was, in fact, the 18th Brumaire against the representatives of the Church, and a sequel to the 18th Brumaire against the representatives of the nation. And Napoleon, who had tried to what extent fear would operate as a parliamentary influence, was preparing to extract the same advantages from the trembling remnants of the purified Council which he had derived from the dispersed members of the *Conseils*, after his *Coup d'Etat.*

Far from considering what had passed as a defeat, he looked upon himself as definite master of the position, for he no longer had to deal with convictions, but with despondency. He resolved to act, not upon an assembly —which even when most amenable is always restless—but upon each bishop separately; persuaded, from his knowledge of their timid natures, that he would be able to make them, as individuals, say the very opposite of what they had affirmed in combination. The method by which this lamentable conversion was effected may easily be guessed when it is known that he employed the combined action of his Minister of Public Worship and his Minister of Police. 'It was then,' writes Savary, with an ingenious euphemism, 'that the Emperor ordered me to turn *the attention of my administration* towards the Council, which he had hitherto expressly desired me to leave to himself.'[1] Under such inspiration — certainly not that of the Holy Spirit — the members of the Council one after the other, to the number of eighty-five, signed a decree giving the power of canonical Institution to the Metropolitan, if within the space of six months the Pope had not made use of his right. This decree was to be submitted to the Pope for his sanction; but in case he should refuse it, the Council was to go on. Honourable conduct was never disavowed by a more disgraceful retractation. When this was accomplished, the unfortunate prelates, humbled and ashamed of their own weakness, were again convoked in Council on the 5th of

[1] Memoirs of the Duc de Broglie.

August 1811. Victors and vanquished again met face to face, both having equal cause to blush, the one side for its victory, the other for its defeat. They then voted the decree with downcast looks and in silence, as though overpowered by the weight of such a public retractation.

Early in September a new deputation, composed of cardinals and bishops, went to Savona to submit the decree of the Council to Pius VII. When presenting him the summary of the deliberations of the venerable assembly, the prelates carefully avoided informing him of the persuasive means which had been employed to convince them. Beneath the influence of these chosen counsellors, who were unanimous in recommending him to be prudent, and urging the necessity of making concessions, the Holy Father, whose first impulse had been to return to and maintain his old theme, 'that he could decide on nothing so long as he was not free,' again abandoned that ground upon which he was so strong, and followed the suggestion of the Council with resignation, and with a more tranquil conscience, since, as a pretext or excuse for his own weakness, he could now point to the example of so large a number of the Princes of the Church. He gave his approbation to the decrees of the Council in the form of a Brief addressed to the bishops, with the addition of certain reservations on the subject of the Gallican doctrines.

Such concessions on the part of the Pope were an unhoped-for triumph for Napoleon. He had gained his cause most thoroughly, and it now depended on himself to turn his success to account by putting an end to so dangerous a quarrel. But these advantages were of trifling moment compared to those which he hoped to obtain later. He certainly hastened to profit by his victory, by causing the decree of the Council to be registered as a Law of the State, and having the nominated bishops instituted. But he reserved to himself the right of referring the pontifical Brief to the Council of State, as containing restrictions contrary to the principles of the Gallican Church.

Napoleon—more deeply absorbed from day to day in his preparations for war against Russia, and convinced that

such a war was about to bring him an increase of *prestige*, greatness, and strength, unprecedented in the history of the world—abstained from answering the affectionate letter in which Pius VII. announced his decision. He left the affairs of the Church in abeyance until the time when, to use his own expression, the Empire of the West being restored, the Popes would resume the modest position they had occupied under the Emperors of the West. 'Empire of the West' and 'Emperor of the Continent' were expressions incessantly on his lips, and betraying the fixed ideas that possessed his mind. Our diplomatic relations with Russia had entered upon a new phase—one which, in Napoleon's reign, was the invariable forerunner of approaching hostilities. From the period of secret armaments, concealed beneath protestations of affection, he had abruptly passed to the ostentatious display of his forces accompanied by open menace. The calm, steady moderation of Alexander had always made him believe that in the end he should succeed in intimidating him. Moreover, Napoleon could no longer avoid seeing the uselessness of all efforts to throw him on the wrong scent as to facts that were patent to the whole of Europe.

He consequently changed his tactics, and owned to Kourakine that his preparations were intended against Russia; adding, that when he had alleged his fear of an English expedition to the Baltic, he had used it only as a *pretext;* [1] an admission little calculated to inspire confidence in the future. At the same time he instructed Lauriston to declare to the Emperor of Russia 'that Napoleon had armed, that he would go on arming still, that he had spent one hundred millions extra, that he could spend one hundred more without touching his reserves, that he would soon add to the conscription of 1811 that of 1812, that he had raised thirty thousand horse, that all his allies were imitating his example—but that he was still always ready to listen to every proposal which might not be incompatible with his honour.' [2]

[1] Despatches from Prince Kourakine, dated May 7, 1811. *Archives Russes.* [2] Napoleon to Marete, June 21, 1811.

Unfortunately, what he declared incompatible with his honour was precisely that which alone could satisfy Russia; namely, either the simple restitution of the States he had seized to the detriment of the duke of Oldenburg, or compensation therefor, consisting of that portion of Poland which he had given to Saxony. As these preliminary demonstrations seemed to produce little impression on the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, which appeared to be quietly intrenching itself within its defensive system, Napoleon determined to follow them up by some public act, as though a scandal of that kind would give more solemnity to the warning. In the grand reception, therefore, of the 15th of August 1811, after the fireworks were over, the Emperor, according to his custom, was making the round of the *salons* in the Palace of the Tuileries, filled that night to overflowing with a brilliant throng, when, on reaching the throne-room, he went straight up to Kourakine. Then, taking him aside, in presence of all the foreign ambassadors, he rapidly addressed to him one of those famous challenges which periodically announced to Europe that a new war had been resolved upon. It was exactly three years, to a day, since Metternich had undergone similar treatment, and no one had forgotten the consequences. His attack, the violent portion of which had been studied beforehand and which lasted upwards of two hours,[1] naturally consisted of one long accusation admitting of no answer, a fact in itself sufficient evidence of its impropriety and bad taste. For an ambassador, who was required to weigh every word and to be careful above all not to commit his Government, it was impossible to accept a diplomatic discussion on such a spot, before such an audience, and opposed to such an adversary. He was condemned to receive every blow, without being able to return a single one; and Napoleon, abusing the privilege of his own position, enjoyed the embarrassment of his adversary, as though it were a first victory obtained over the power which had incurred his anger.

In this long attack on Russia Napoleon recapitulated

[1] *Archives Russes:* Despatch of Prince Kourakine, dated August 15, 1811.

all his grievances, true and false. He complained that preparations for war had been the only answer to the advances he had made during the last six months, and to his offers of indemnity to the duke of Oldenburg, who, after all, if not his subject was at least his vassal, belonging much more to France than to Russia, as he was a member of the Confederation of the Rhine. Such an indemnity they no doubt wished to get in Poland, but he never would give up one inch of that territory; and their not accepting a portion of Germany meant that they wished for war. Hence the precipitate armaments of Russia, the recall of troops from the Danube at the time they were required there more than ever against the Turks, and at the risk of being defeated by the latter, as they had been in fact before Rustschuk. Such being the case, how could they hope to make him believe they did not wish for war? *As for him, he was a man of that nature, that, when he did not understand, he mistrusted!* Therefore, he had armed in his turn, armed for his defence. But, *although he had more money and more resources than Russia*, he could not continue to make such sacrifices for ever. A time would come when the measure would be full, and when he would be forced against his will to draw the sword. . . . However, he persisted in not desiring war, although he could soon place 600,000 men in line against Russia, while at the same time continuing to send 25,000 annually to Spain. If they reached this point, if this fatal war were to take place, Alexander and Romanzoff would alone be responsible for the evils it would cause, for they might know well enough when it began, but no one could tell when or how it would end. On that point they seemed to labour under inconceivable blindness. They had the *vertigo* at St. Petersburg; *they were like a hare which has been shot in the head, and turns round without knowing where he is going to.* But they ought to remember that he was not accustomed to be defeated; they ought to recollect the fate of Prussia, who had also once wished to rush on her ruin![1]

[1] *Archives Russes*, Despatch of Prince Kourakine, dated August 15, 1811.

Before the Emperor had finished his long scolding harangue, the *salons* of the Palace had grown empty, and all the witnesses of this painful scene had glided away one by one, with the exception of the Ambassadors of Austria and of Spain,—a mute but significant protest, so well described in Talleyrand's charming witticism, 'What a pity that a great man should be so ill-bred!' Poor Kourakine, still ill from the effects of the burns he had received in the fire at Prince Schwarzenberg's Palace, and suffering great pain, remained standing during this volley, 'without,' as he himself wrote, 'appearing for one moment either downcast, uneasy, or impatient, but motionless, with the calmest aspect, and a smile always playing on his mouth.'[1]

Next day the whole world knew that a rupture with Russia had become imminent. Matters had now reached a point at which hostilities would at once have commenced had the season been less advanced. The threats which Napoleon had thus publicly levelled at Russia in no degree modified the attitude of that power. They had no other result than to induce Alexander immediately to declare to Lauriston 'that he would refuse all indemnity in Poland, and that he held strictly to the restitution of Oldenburg.'

Peace, however, continued to be spoken of, and those pretended negotiations were kept up, in which each side only tries to place his adversary in the wrong, resembling the first essays in fencing, where two combatants cross their swords. They even went so far as to propose disarmament;[2] the two Emperors mutually saying they were ready to consent to it, while both redoubled their activity in pressing forward their preparations. Alexander's disarmament consisted in ordering a levy of 100,000 men, and Napoleon's in calling out the conscription of 1812. They persisted likewise in swearing in the strongest manner that neither would be the first to draw the sword, while Alexander announced the departure of a new negotiator commissioned to settle everything, and Napoleon pretended to attach the utmost importance to the arrival of that same diplomatist,

[1] *Archives Russes. Ibid.*

[2] Napoleon to Marot, Nov. 6, 1811.

who, however, never came. All this was only so much pretence. In reality, neither the one nor the other wished to draw back; but each felt the enormity of such a war, and its inevitable and incalculable results, and each endeavoured to avoid at least the immediate responsibility of it. On this ground Napoleon did not maintain his advantage any better than on that of strict right; for if Alexander still said, as he continued to say to the very last, 'I will not attack, I shall defend myself;' Napoleon was beginning to say, 'They will force me to attack in order to defend myself.'

Henceforward, secure of having the whole of Europe with him, even the governments of Prussia and Austria which he had treated with such merciless rigour, he became more confirmed in his designs from the certainty of having collected every chance of success on his side. He even began to calculate the resources which the war would place in his hand. Not only ought it to give him the dominion of the world, but likewise a means of restoring his finances: 'I shall make this war for a political object, but also for the sake of my finances. Have I not always re-established them by war?' he wrote, in answer to the representations of his Ministers, Gaudin and Mollien.[1] It is allowable to suppose, from some remarks which occasionally escaped him, and from his unwonted delay in coming to a final decision, that some apprehension as to the ultimate issue of the enterprise occasionally flitted across his mind. The immense extent of his preparations, however, and the extreme precision of his calculations, which included and foresaw everything, only served the more effectually to hide from him the snare into which he was about to fall. According to all the positive data of the formidable problem, was he not certain to solve it to his advantage? For had he not superiority in numbers, in resources, in troops and in generalship?

From this point of view, the only decisive one in his opinion, his victory might in some sort be proved scientifically. But were there no other elements to take into

[1] *Mémoires de Mollien.*

account, equally real though less known? Alongside that official Europe which prostrated itself so low at his feet, was there not another Europe, the people themselves, menacing, irritated, impatient to rise against him? Alongside the force of armaments, was there not the force of patriotism, love of liberty, hatred, national vengeance? In fine, were there not, above the resources of regular tactics, the surprises, terrible as they were unforeseen, of those tactics of despair which the Spaniards had already proved to be so efficacious?

All this latent energy—which was nothing else than the tardy reawakening of the moral forces of European society—counted for nothing in Napoleon's eyes. Had it not been by denying their existence or by trampling them under foot that he had built up his fortune to such a height? How then could he attribute a power to them at that date, which he had invariably refused to them heretofore? Warnings and cautions were not, however, wanting to him. He had been at several different times informed of the desperate plans of Russia and her savage resolve to destroy all around him, provided he could be involved in the destruction of the Empire. He was cautioned, with even more earnestness, of the German conspiracies. Alquier transmitted to him from Stockholm a significant remark of Alexander's: 'If the Emperor Napoleon should experience a reverse, the whole of Germany will rise to oppose his retreat, or to prevent the arrival of his reinforcements.' His brother Jerome, who was still better situated for knowing what was going on in Germany, informed him, in the month of January 1811, of the proposal that had been made to him to enter into a secret league against France, but the only thanks he received from Napoleon was reproach for having encouraged such overtures by his equivocal conduct.[1] Jerome, however, returned to the subject in July, and again in December 1811:—

'If any persons speak to your Majesty of tranquillity and submission, they deceive you. Excitement exists in the highest degree, the wildest hopes are fostered and nursed

[1] Correspondence of King Jerome, vol. v., January 16 and 21, 1811.

with enthusiasm; the example of Spain is everywhere welcomed, and should war break out, every country situated between the Rhine and the Oder will be the focus of a vast and energetic insurrection.'[1] Marshal Davout and General Rapp transmitted him identically the same information from Hamburg and Dantzig. But, far from encouraging such confidential communications, Napoleon was irritated by them, either because he declined to question the possibility of success, or that they seemed a kind of slur cast on the infallibility of his genius.

'There is nothing in common between Spain and Germany,' he wrote to Davout, . . . 'There is no cause for fear, even were Germany as large, as slothful, as much addicted to assassination, or given over to the monks, as the people of Spain, where there are 300,000 monks. Consider, therefore, what have we to dread from a people who are so prudent, so reasonable, so cold, so tolerant, so little inclined to excess of any kind, that there is no instance of a man having been assassinated in Germany during the war. If there were any stir in Germany it would be *in our favour* and against the petty princes!' Rapp's information met with even a worse reception: 'I do not know why Rapp meddles in *what does not concern him.* . . . What makes him talk of what passes in Hungary and of the spirit which animates the Confederation and those countries, he who is far away from them? *I beg you will not place such rhapsodies under my eyes.* My time is too precious to waste on such twaddle. . . . It only serves to make me lose my time and to *soil my mind* by absurd pictures or suppositions.'[2]

In presence of such hallucination, caused by pride and infatuation, we seem to hear Macbeth in his delirium insulting the messengers who announce to him the approach of the enemy's armies:—

> 'Bring me no more reports; let them fly all:
> The mind I sway by, and the heart I bear,
> Shall never sway with doubt, or shake with fear.'

[1] Jerome to Napoleon, December 5, 1811.
[2] Napoleon to Davout, December 2, 1810.

In the same way had this upstart, this great calculator, this observer, once so full of penetration and so prompt to seize every circumstance which could serve him, now ended by falling into a passion, like a child, against the tranquil and sovereign power of facts. Facts which had the misfortune to displease him he viewed as non-existing; or rather he treated them as rebellious courtiers, whom a great king suppresses and dismisses by driving them from his presence. He no longer deigned to enter into any discussion with the force of things. An obstacle ceased to exist from the moment that he had refused to see it. And this was the result of ten years of absolute power! One day, however, at the close of this very year 1811, which ended under such sad auspices, a ray of wisdom and reason flashed across the mind which was already tottering, and Napoleon wrote to his librarian to ask him 'for the most detailed information obtainable upon *the Campaign of Charles XII. in Poland and Russia.*'[1] What lessons in the name of Charles XII. and the disastrous recollections of Pultowa! It was no chance which brought that prophetic name beneath his pen. What ought he to have seen in it? A presentiment? a last warning given him by fate? He probably rather found in it an opportunity for applauding and exalting himself at the expense of the Swedish adventurer! The impressions to which the perusal gave rise in his mind have remained unknown, but his acts sufficiently prove that the lesson was lost. To him who is determined to perish, everything—even an instrument of salvation—becomes a snare and a danger.

[1] Napoleon to M. Barbier, December 19, 1811.

M. LANFREY *died November* 16, 1877, *aged forty-nine,*
leaving his HISTORY OF NAPOLEON *unfinished.*

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